The projectionist in cinema **and the persistence of film**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Film and Television Studies

Claire Jesson

University of Warwick
Department of Film and Television Studies
June 2018

Contents

List of illustrations **3**

Acknowledgements **7**

Declaration **8**

Abstract **9**

Introduction: The projectionist and the persistence of cinema **10**
Methodology 17
Corpus selection 24
Structure of chapters 31

Review of the literature: Reflexivity and intertextuality **34**
Reflexivity in film 38
Filmic intertextuality 52
Anticipated contribution to current research 58

Chapter one: The projectionist and the slapstick screen: *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*, *Sherlock Jr.* and *The Projectionist* **60**
Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show: the audience as attraction 65
The function of the picture show and 'cinematic voyeurism' 70
Cinema and ways of seeing: the viewer and the filmmaker 82
Sherlock Jr.: the screen as attraction 85
The Projectionist: the self-conscious screen 107
The significance of screens 111
Projectionist, fanatic and fantasist 130
'The Projectionist' within *The Projectionist* 139
Conclusion 149

Chapter two: Between earth and paradise: projectionists in *The Smallest Show on Earth*, *Coming Up Roses* and *Cinema Paradiso* **155**
Exhibition as 'turf war' in *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Coming Up Roses* 160
The persistence of cinema in *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Coming Up Roses* 171
The film in the film in *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Coming Up Roses* 174

Cinema Paradiso: projectionist as spectator and filmmaker 180
Cinema Paradiso and the exhibition landscape 187
Social use of cinema in *Cinema Paradiso* 194
The persistence of cinema in *Cinema Paradiso* 197
The film in the film in *Cinema Paradiso* 202
Cinema Paradiso, *Amarcord* and the cinema audience 217
Conclusion 220

Chapter three: "This theatre is haunted by ghosts": *Kings of the Road* and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* **223**
Kings of the Road: the projectionist as patron and cineaste 225
Exhibition at the margins 242
The persistence of cinema in *Kings of the Road* 257
Goodbye, Dragon Inn and the imminent projectionist 262
The visible projectionist and the visible audience 275
Persistence of cinema in *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* 281
Dragon Inn in *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* 285
Conclusion 294

Conclusion **297**

Appendix: Films featuring projectionists **306**

Bibliography **312**

Filmography **330**

List of illustrations

Chapter one

Figure 1.1. *Two Rubes at the Theatre* makes a spectacle of rubes in the audience 69

Figures 1.2a and 1.2b. *Trapeze Disrobing Act* (1.2a) is one of the films shot using the same variety-theatre set as *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1.2b)..... 69

Figures 1.3a and 1.3b. *Amy Muller* (William Heise, 1896) (1.3a) illustrates the aesthetic of films shot in the Black Maria studio, as does 'Parisian Dancer' in *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1.3b)..... 73

Figure 1.4. Josh shares the on-screen rubes' joke in *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* 78

Figure 1.5. In *Interrupted Lovers* the rural couple is interrupted from behind 79

Figures 1.6a and 1.6b. In *Sherlock Jr.* Keaton's trademark identity is established first (1.6a). He subsequently reveals a disguise (1.6b) 90

Figure 1.7. *Sherlock Jr.*'s boy appeals to the audience..... 92

Figures 1.8a and 1.8b. The heroine of *Sherlock Holmes* (1922) (1.8a) and that of *Sherlock Jr.* (1.8b) are similarly styled 94

Figure 1.9. The inscription of a screening 'breakdown' in *The Projectionist*. 112

Figure 1.10. *The Projectionist*'s Chuck (far right) 'framed' through a window as friendly with neighbourhood characters..... 113

Figure 1.11. *The Projectionist*'s Chuck hesitates in front of a grocery store and two black men 115

Figure 1.12. A reverse shot of Chuck looking warily at the store 115

Figure 1.13. We cut to Chuck's hallucination of Captain Flash surrounded by The Bat's black-clad henchmen 115

Hallucination triggers in *The Projectionist* (figs. 1.14-1.16).
Figure 1.14. Watching *Barbarella* triggers a 'trailer' 120

Figure 1.15. A pornographic magazine is another trigger 121

Figure 1.16. A crone-like figure triggers another hallucination 121

Figure 1.17. Flash and the scientist's daughter interact with the screen like 'rubes' in *The Projectionist*..... 128

Figure 1.18. Frame enlargement from *The Projectionist*: a still image from *Sherlock Jr.* is taped to the wall of the booth 131

Figures 1.19a and 1.19b. Is 'The Projectionist' marked out from *The Projectionist* by long shots of the screen displaying titles (1.19a) and end credits (1.19b)? 141

Figures 1.20a and 1.20b. A block of colour (1.20a) and blackness (1.20b) 'describe' the screen and film frame in the first and last shots of *The Projectionist* 141

Figure 1.21. The revelation of the marquee shows 'The Projectionist', a film in *The Projectionist* 142

Figures 1.22a and 1.22b. Ina Balin's photograph displayed in *The Projectionist*'s booth (1.22a) and behind Harry (1.22b) 143

Figures 1.23a and 1.23b. *The Projectionist*'s Chuck passes from the booth (1.23a) to the screen (1.23b) 145

Figure 1.24. A long shot of the diegetic screen shows *The Projectionist*'s Chuck glancing at himself through the port 146

Chapter two

Figures 2.1a, 2.1b and 2.1c. The two projectors pictured above (2.1b and 2.1c) are from Kalee and appear to correspond to those in *The Smallest Show on Earth* (2.1a) 164

Frame enlargements from *Coming Up Roses* (figs. 2.2-2.5).
Figure 2.2. 'Raiders' is advertised as coming soon to the Rex 168

Figures 2.3a and 2.3b. Trevor shows the auditorium off with a light show ... 169

Figures 2.4a and 2.4b. Trevor and Mona reclaim the Rex as a courtship site 171

Figures 2.5a and 2.5b. The compost sale yields a cheerful cinema-inflected ending (2.5a), while the headstone (2.5b) alludes to the end of cinema 173

Figures 2.6a and 2.6b. In *The Smallest Show on Earth* Quill mounts the projector (2.6a). An on-screen Indian obstructs the railroad (2.6b) 176

Figures 2.7a and 2.7b. Mr Davies witnesses Konga's on-screen destruction at the hands of the authorities (2.7a) as *Konga* ends (2.7b) in *Coming Up Roses* 179

Frame enlargements from *Cinema Paradiso* (figs. 2.8a-2.17).
Figures 2.8a and 2.8b. Toto's viewing of *The Lower Depths* (2.8a) imitates Alfredo's watching from the projection booth (2.8b) 181

Figure 2.9. Toto recreates the action of the projector 182

Figure 2.10. Two projectors and scales of cinematic endeavour 186

Figure 2.11. The comedian, Toto, with big and small bells in *The Firemen of Viggiu* 190

Figure 2.12. Italian films were typically split over two reels and structured around two acts..... 191

Figure 2.13. There are several close-ups on the nameplate indicating the projector's Milan-based manufacturer, Prevost..... 192

Figures 2.14a and 2.14b. Crowds are present at the first destruction of the Paradiso by fire (2.14a) and at its demolition (2.14b)..... 198

Figure 2.15. The clips shown from *Anna* suppress the protagonist's identity as a nun in favour of flashbacks to her sexy past 207

Figures 2.16a and 2.16b. First the image of a young male in *I Vitelloni* (2.16a), then that of the workers he insults (2.16b), are superimposed on the audience through the screen..... 209

Figure 2.17. Men start to constitute the cinema audience..... 212

Figure 2.18. On-screen and off-screen spaces appear almost continuous .. 214

Chapter three

Frame enlargements from *Kings of the Road* (figs. 3.1-3.5).
Figure 3.1. Wim Wenders is seated in the auditorium as Bruno makes his way to the projection booth 228

Figure 3.2. Pauline and Bruno sit separately in the auditorium 231

Figures 3.3a and 3.3b. Bruno watches Robert's plunge into the river (3.3a). Robert emerges in the manner of a slapstick clown (3.3b) 234

Figures 3.4a and 3.4b. West German films quoted via publicity images in the ticket booth (3.4a). Robert lingers over the film fare offered in rural cinemas (3.4b) 236

Figures 3.5a, 3.5b and 3.5c. Brigitte Bardot's image by Bruno (3.5a) and Fritz Lang's by the owner (3.5b). A wider shot alludes to *Contempt* by bringing the portraits together (3.5c)..... 240

Figures 3.6a and 3.6b. Frame enlargement from the jail scene in *Easy Rider* (3.6a). Bruno's awakening in the military hut in *Kings of the Road* (3.6b) bears visual parallels to its New Hollywood forerunner..... 242

Frame enlargements from *Kings of the Road* (figs. 3.7-3.13).
Figure 3.7. Introductory title card informs us the film is in black and white .. 244

Figure 3.8. Aspect ratio title card 244

Figure 3.9. Title card situating the film in space and time 244

Figures 3.10a and 3.10b. Bruno ‘sheltered’ by a projector in the prologue (3.10a) but subsequently failing to find refuge among projectors in the epilogue (3.10b)..... 252

Figure 3.11. The landscape is ‘projected’ onto the truck’s reflective surfaces, making the truck a 'cinema' 254

Figure 3.12. The note Robert fixes to the cabin door..... 256

Figure 3.13. A portrait of Johannes Gutenberg hangs on the wall of Robert’s father’s newspaper offices..... 256

Frame enlargements from *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (figs. 3.14a-3.19).
Figures 3.14a and 3.14b. The audience are present in the opening scenes (3.14a) but have disappeared when the tourist arrives (3.14b)..... 267

Figure 3.15. The clerk peers into the projection booth through a crack created by the partially opened door..... 272

Figure 3.16. The shot in which the projectionist appears..... 277

Figures 3.17a and 3.17b. An audience member appears as faintly vampiric (3.17a) and looms over the tourist somewhat monstrously when retrieving her shoe (3.17b)..... 281

Figure 3.18. In the foreground of the frame, and to the left of its centre (circled), one can barely discern a ‘figure’ that resembles the clerk..... 285

Figure 3.19. When the tourist (left in shadow and long shot) opens the auditorium door, escaping sounds will cause the clerk (right) to raise her head..... 288

Figures 3.20a, 3.20b and 3.20c. The clerk is positioned adjacent to the screen that bears the image of *Dragon Inn*’s female warrior (3.20a). Subsequently, very rapid cuts alternate close-ups on the warrior’s face from *Dragon Inn* (3.20b) with the clerk’s (3.20c)..... 292

Acknowledgements

This thesis forms a strand of the Projection Project, which is an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded research project. Without the support of an AHRC studentship I wouldn't have been able to undertake this work. The project team comprised Charlotte Brunsdon, Jon Burrows, Richard Wallace, Michael Pigott and, at various stages, Elaine Robinson, Anne Birchall and Sabina Ahmed.

I have occasionally had cause to wonder what it meant to people who have dedicated their working lives to the cinema to see their occupation acknowledged as significant by our project, especially during public-facing activities. Such thoughts were no doubt prompted by reflections on the impact the project has had on my life. I am profoundly grateful to have been part of it. It was of Charlotte Brunsdon's devising. Her deft leadership has been inspirational, and her advice and guidance as co-supervisor of this thesis invaluable.

I have been most fortunate in Jon Burrows as my supervisor. He often had the overview of this thesis that I lacked. His patient support and good-humoured temperament have been key in its coming to fruition.

Others I wish to thank from Warwick's film department include Tracey McVey, Adam Gallimore, Lynsey Willmore and, from the library, Richard Perkins. We rejoice in two projectionists, Frank Gibson and Richard Allen. My departmental teaching career has greatly benefited from the support of Alastair Phillips and, lately, Rachel Moseley. Thanks are likewise due to Julie Lobalzo Wright and Jon Burrows.

I shall mention just a handful of the many from the department's postgraduate cohort who have made it a community. Zoë Shacklock, James Taylor and Cat Lester are sterling. Helen Palmer's friendship and sense of humour have been very important to me.

I mightn't have embarked on this film studies journey at all without the intervention of my wonderful and very dear friend, Tamsin Mosse. The interest she and Natalie Milne showed at a juncture in my life, and for many years before and since, are not forgotten. Matt Guise was there too (thanks, Dave).

Alex Moseley has been sunshine, love and fun in this vale of tears for fifty years (or so) now; together with Neil Endall, their friendship has been sustaining, to say the least, as has that of Ruth Higgins and Katie Westwood (with her adorable girls and Pete). My one phone call from custody would be to my brief, of course, but otherwise to the Bywaters: my sister Davina, brother-in-law Rob and Oliver, my favourite boy.

My first visit to the cinema was to *The Muppet Movie* with my dad. It is a film with a projectionist (the Swedish Chef causing chaos in the booth). Dad would surely have been bemused (to put it politely) to discover that such a thing might be academic research. For innumerable things besides, final acknowledgement is for my late parents, Andy and Brenda Jesson.

Declaration

This thesis has not previously been submitted for examination at another institution. The thesis is the candidate's own work.

Some material in chapter two was published in a journal article: Claire Jesson, '"We Shall Really Have to Do Something About Your Equipment": The Projectionist's Negotiation of Obsolescence in *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Coming Up Roses*', *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 15:1 (January 2018), pp. 115-30.

Abstract

Depictions of films being projected to an audience are ubiquitous in cinema. Yet the projectionist, as a figure of potential interest, has been as invisible to the academy as he or she strives to be in real life when running a film from the projection box. The present research addresses this by uniting, in a full-length study, films in which the projectionist is a protagonist. It aims to demonstrate that he (for it is rarely she as far as on-screen representation is concerned) enriches and complicates the ways in which films are reflexive.

Research on filmic reflexivity frequently concentrates on representations of the film director, producer, writer or star. The projectionist can be analogous to these figures. Yet cinema about him makes visible his, and the ordinary viewer's, relationships to film and how films function as public objects. My starting point is the unique positioning of the projectionist as a spectator cum 'filmmaker' who makes the audience visible and raises a set of issues around watching film and its attendant practices and contexts.

American comedies are examined in the first chapter. They explore the individual viewer's interaction with film through slapstick play with the screen. In contrast, the films of chapter two depict how collective audiences receive film. The dynamic relationship between films and how they are circulated, screened, received, reconstructed, or even ignored by the viewer in different contexts invite questions about cinema's social uses. Finally, chapter three's films are themed around the audience's retreat from cinema. The projectionist is a figure closely associated with cinemagoing as a declining practice and with the persistence of cinema as a problem.

Apart from finding that movies with projectionist-protagonists are deeply concerned with film spectatorship, a distinction also emerges between ways in which a film may be for the audience and ways in which it is about them. This is a thematic concern of the films in my corpus. However, I examine how the films orient themselves towards their extra-diegetic viewer as well. Within this, the intertextuality of film illuminates the filmmaker's own viewing and addresses an initiated audience by means of a shared cinephilia. I attempt to distinguish the range of discursive strategies films deploy to reach audiences and to thematise cinema and its importance. I argue that a film's anticipated reception is often inscribed in the text itself and that films thus tell us how to watch them.

I proceed by means of the close reading of films, which is sometimes maligned as a scholarly practice. In the light of this, I attempt to accomplish two main objectives with this study. Firstly, I argue that the concept of reflexivity is extended by analysis of films about exhibition and reception; how films reflect upon their reconstruction by the viewer describes a place for the audience, their reception of film, the exhibition context and the public sphere in discussions about reflexivity. Secondly, the study seeks, by means of its methodology, to re-state the case for film analysis as the indispensable business of film studies. The figure of the projectionist grants access to these related endeavours.

Introduction
The projectionist and the persistence of cinema

The term or label 'projectionist' might be applied to any person who operates the projector in a variety of situations in which a film is shown. However, this study contemplates the role of the projectionist as it is understood in its more common usage: as someone employed in a cinema to project movies. Though usually concealed from public view in a projection room, the projectionist is nonetheless the figure associated with staging the public exhibition of film for an audience. As if to complicate the projectionist's concealment in real life, there is no shortage of fiction films that contain scenes in which theatrical film exhibition and cinemagoing take place. Many include a projectionist character running films, if only briefly. Uniquely in the research done thus far on filmic representations of the film industry, the present study is a full-length exploration of how and why the cinematic staging of the theatrical and commercial projection of movies is a site of narrative interest and action. It investigates how film fictionalises and reflects upon its own exhibition and reception. The principal site for my examination is the figure of the projectionist in film fiction.[1]

Since TV usurped cinema as the primary mass medium for entertainment and information, developments in the way films are distributed and made available to the public have decentred theatrical exhibition as the mode in which they are normally watched. As will be explored later, the projectionist's narrative fortunes are often in some way connected to the degree to which

[1] Within the study I will use both masculine and feminine pronouns when referring to actual projectionists as they exist in life as opposed to in cinema. However, when referring to the projectionist in cinema, I will use masculine pronouns since all the on-screen examples I examine are male.

theatrical exhibition is an important mode of film consumption. It is often through him that the consequences of the rise of other viewing practices are problematised. Questions of how and why one watches films often attend the depiction of declining cinemagoing, especially in the filmic case studies I consider here. Moreover, the projectionist's privileged relationship to film implicates him in questions as to what it means to screen motion pictures. For example, the projectionist's routine of running and viewing the film in order to check its condition before screening it publicly, which is a practice depicted in *Cinema Paradiso* (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*) (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988) activates a different spectatorial routine from that of the audience. The projectionist thus interacts with film on a different basis. In short, he highlights alternative viewing practices and modes and other possibilities in terms of how one sees the medium. As an individuated character fleshed out with both a distinct physical form and set of personality or psychological traits, he furnishes an instance through which questions as to how the viewer and the film interrelate can be raised.

Even though the projectionist might be the first of their number to encounter a particular production, he simultaneously forms part of the local audience for a film. In other words, he holds an ambiguous, intermediate position as a privileged viewer on one hand, but on the other, a particularised audience member who lends physical and psychological form to a constituency who might otherwise seem anonymous. This study departs from previous work on filmic reflexivity by examining the significance of intradiegetic film audiences and how fiction film comes to terms with them, their behaviour and problems attaching to them such as, for example, their preference for watching TV over attending the cinema. The projectionist is often a representative instance of

such an audience and helps to delineate who they are, how they relate to cinema and the social uses they make of it.

I will further complicate questions as to the projectionist's roles, functions and identity by highlighting how fiction films position him within the industrial apparatus of cinema. Though he is a figure whose spectatorship of film reveals multiple viewing positions, he is also part of the production machinery inasmuch as the projectionist's screening of the film is performative in ways analogous to the activities of the film's director or its actors. Indeed, when film projection is staged within film it very frequently breaks down and this is one of the ways in which the projectionist's significance is emphasised, showing that the execution of his tasks irrevocably affects how an audience might encounter a film. In the documentary from 2012, *Side by Side* (Christopher Kenneally), which investigates and compares digital and photochemical film creation, Martin Scorsese is interviewed about celluloid projection and calls the projectionist the film's 'real auteur'. Delivering his judgement in an ironic tone, he betrays misgivings about the influence the projectionist may bring to bear on how the film is received. Scorsese highlights a potential point of rupture in which the director's vision might be somehow broken or distorted at the point of exhibition. Jon Burrows and Richard Wallace demonstrate that projectionists in real life considered projection 'an element of film production'. In this, they were encouraged by at least one professional manual, which suggested that they were '"the last link" in a "lengthy chain" made up of actors, cameramen, sound recordists, musicians, editors and laboratory workers'.[2]

[2] Jon Burrows and Richard Wallace, *'Slaves to the Lamp': A History of British Cinema from the Projection Box* (New Barnet: John Libbey, forthcoming 2021). The projection manual cited is R Howard Cricks, *The Complete Projectionist: A Textbook for all who Handle Sound and Pictures in the Kinema*, 4th edn (London: Odhams Press, 1949), p. 1.

The present study is the first to isolate diegetic projectionists as a means by which fiction films capture the alchemy of film reception or the encounter between the viewer and the screen or film. I want to argue that films about projectionists add an important and, so far, overlooked set of representative figures to those of the film director, producer, writer or movie star. Firstly, I want to argue that the projectionist, partly because of his relatively low visibility, is a figure of considerable complexity who, uniquely, straddles film production and reception as I have described. As part of this I will also show how the projectionist's persona and role often allude to those of the film's director or maker. Secondly, I want to argue that films about the projectionist often yield representations of the cinemagoer and cinemagoing, which usually command little attention in studies of filmic reflexivity. Films about filmmaking, directors, producers, writers, stars and actors relate primarily to the first section of the production-distribution-exhibition chain. I hope to show that both the cinema projectionist and the audience grant us access to a different set of questions regarding, firstly, the social significance of cinema and, secondly, the existence of a contextually sensitive mode of filmic reflexivity.

Apart from the projectionist's bifurcated role as film producer and audience, a dichotomy attends his visibility. A conceit of David Rosenbaum's 1975 article subtitled 'Trysting with Trolls' is that projectionists are 'starved for human contact' and that Rosenbaum hunts them down to their obscure 'Stygian' burrows in order to discover the nature of their activities.[3] Likewise, the extended use acquired by the word 'troll' in the age of social media is consistent with, and alludes to, the mythical creature's shy, antisocial nature as

[3] David Rosenbaum, 'The Industry: Trysting with Trolls', *Film Comment* 11:3 (May-June 1975), pp. 36-7.

it is applied to those imagined as a somewhat sad, lonely, embittered or angry set of individuals who conceal their identities while abusing others online. Like the projectionist, the online troll can, through the mischief he or she perpetrates, become highly visible in his or her anonymity or invisibility. Though, as a troll, the projectionist doesn't work 'above ground' as do actors, directors and producers, neither is he invisible to the same degree as other 'Morlocks' of celluloid (to use Rosenbaum's term for those who process film in the lab or ship prints as well as projectionists). Although the projectionist mostly inhabits a netherworld, his performative role, like that of the director or actor, is something we can visualise. It also lends itself to depiction more readily than the highly technical and exacting work of a lab technician.

Not only are questions of the projectionist's visibility complicated by the repeated deployment of the filmic medium to weave him into screened narratives, his states of presence and absence become a significant issue in individual films I have chosen to analyse. Yet visibility is a pertinent contemporary issue too. My research has been conducted in the aftermath of the wholesale transition of most cinemas in the western world from 35mm celluloid to digital projection, which occurred from around 2011. As a consequence, projectionists were made redundant in a relatively short space of time. They have thus been rendered invisible in the sense that their role no longer exists as far as film exhibition is concerned. It only takes an hour or two to show an unskilled, inexperienced person how to run a film from a digital cinema package (DCP), and therefore it is done, in theory, easily and competently by someone with no knowledge of cinematic projection. Rosenbaum's article furnishes some insight into the various ways the celluloid carrier of the film image, and the equipment through which it is run, are subject

to neglect, mishandling or harmful environmental factors which all demand the projectionist's skill to mitigate or rectify. Yet it is celluloid that requires these functions, and without it the projectionist's capacities are obsolete. Indeed, this story is contained within a low-budget British horror film, *The Last Showing* (Phil Hawkins, 2014), featuring a projectionist, Stuart (Robert Englund), impelled to homicidal mania by his demotion to the concessions stand when the multiplex in which he works abandons celluloid in favour of digital projection. Stuart's obsolescence as a projectionist is reinforced by the management's prohibiting him from entering the projection box and relegating him to a deeply uncomfortable public-facing sphere of occupation.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded Projection Project, of which the present study forms a research strand, was established in 2014 to investigate and document the role of the projectionist in Britain as its passage into history occurs.[4] As part of this multifaceted project to explore the projectionist's significance, which necessarily enhances the visibility of the role, Richard Wallace has undertaken interviews with former projectionists and both he and Jon Burrows have conducted research into trade journals and other sources.[5] This has yielded important findings regarding the British projectionist's self-conception. They have unearthed ways in which projectionists understand and express their positions, functions and identities in relation to industrial and social changes. Although I haven't restricted myself to British cinema, as does Wallace's and Burrows' research, my enquiry complements the historical strands in two ways. I designed my project by viewing a great number of films in which projectionists are depicted. Therefore,

[4] Grant number AH/L008033/1, The Projection Project, University of Warwick, 2014-8.
[5] Much of this research will be published in Burrows' and Wallace's volume, which is forthcoming in 2021. See n. 2 of the present chapter.

within the parameters I set out here, my work incidentally documents the projectionist's depiction for a film-watching public from 1901 onwards (though far from exhaustively). Secondly, the projectionist's filmic appearances might function as secondary sources, of a sort, within historical research to the extent that they put forth an image of projection for public consumption. They therefore surely influence, or attempt to influence, the cinemagoer's idea of the substance of the projectionist's work. This connection or idea is detectable when following the online discussions of projectionists or former projectionists regarding films portraying their work.[6] Whether making observations or asking questions about the foibles or merits of a certain model of Cinemeccanica projector appearing in *Cinema Paradiso* or another set of issues, behind such exchanges lie not only their own relationship to the depicted 'reality' but a certain jealousy of the image of the projection box rendered on film. Though a person might have been to the cinema hundreds of times, their visualisation of how films are thrown onto the screen is more likely to be derived from media representations of that process than from experience of real projection rooms, which are normally inaccessible. Thus the medium with which the projectionist works is at least one important point at which the popular image of the projectionist is formed.

As will emerge in the present study, the significance of the projectionist's visibility and his being made visible in fiction film is of far greater interest to me than any attempt to marshal into patterns or tendencies the ways in which movies create, confirm, deny or complicate such stereotypes as might attach to the projectionist as a personality. I am not much concerned with investigating

[6] See, for example, the forum on the *Film-Tech* website at <http://www.film-tech.com>, accessed 14 February 2018.

the extent to which film conceives of the projectionist as, to put it crudely, troll-like, antisocial or otherwise dysfunctional. That is to say, although complex portraits of individual projectionist characters and their fears, phobias and failures will emerge, they don't delimit the scope of the present interrogation. Rather, my interests are grounded in dichotomies surrounding the projectionist's roles as both producer and audience; his relationships to, and intermediary positions between both films and audiences; his performances of film spectatorship and its different iterations and the projectionist's – and audience's – states of visibility and of presence and absence. In summarising my research agenda thus, it appears that my work chimes with one familiar debate in film scholarship, which is concerned with the dual states of presence and absence as they pertain to the screened film and its images. Several of my filmic case studies apply similar questions to the audience and the extent of their presence.

Methodology

The methodology for the present study is the close analysis of films, which is a scholarly practice that invites scepticism, if not scorn, in some quarters. Yet the nature of my project means it cannot divorce itself from its methodology as if there were alternatives available. As far as the present study is concerned, defending the practice of the interpretative reading of films entails a defence of the premise that the projectionist in cinema is a valid object of study per se, since one can't access it except through films and their interpretation.

The projectionist is no doubt a valid object of study as far as the historian is concerned. However, the Projection Project originated with film studies so that our interest isn't limited to topics like labour relations or the film industry's tribulations as explored through the projectionist. Aspects such as these form

part of the tapestry the wider project creates, which includes photographer Richard Nicholson's original portraits of the projectionist.[7] Yet as an object for film studies (and for film history within that) the projectionist's significance beyond the industries in which he operates is a problem with which we are concerned. In this connection, his representation in film is an important line of enquiry. Representations in the media and the arts accord the projectionist an existence, and now an afterlife, in popular culture and imagination, and, as has already been mentioned, projectionists themselves are aware of, and concerned with, this extra lease of life.

I proceed from the notion that the films I have selected, which take film exhibition as their subject, might articulate ideas about it. However, this is no doubt the wrong approach from the point of view of those anxious that what John A Bateman and Karl-Heinrich Schmidt call 'discursive interpretation'[8] opens a door to 'bad' or 'mistaken' analysis.[9] For some of those who inveigh against interpretation, films respond to our '"sense-seeking" behaviour', and what is primarily interesting about them is how they are pre-attuned to the cognitive processes we deploy when we follow a film narrative and believe we understand it.[10] We should therefore study the mechanics of how films convey meaning and make themselves comprehensible, rather than attempt to discover meaning in films. This is an exercise that might be done with any film that seemed to bear meaning in novel or interesting ways, but to isolate films about projectionists as an object for this purpose is nonsensical unless they all

[7] 'The Projectionists' was an exhibition of photographs by Richard Nicholson, which was commissioned for The Projection Project. It was first shown in The Gas Hall in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery from 19 till 24 April 2016 as part of Birmingham's Flatpack Film Festival.
[8] John A Bateman and Karl-Heinrich Schmidt, *Multimodal Film Analysis: How Films Mean* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 287.
[9] Ibid., p. 2.
[10] Ibid.

happened to be similarly experimental in this regard. In other words, a prohibition on interpretation renders the projectionist's representation in cinema an invalid problem to begin with.

One might wonder how it has become almost reprehensible that a student of film studies should propose to discover meaning in films. Richard Dyer makes the simple (but not simplistic) observation that it is impossible to discuss film without partaking of interpretation of some kind; without at least dipping one's toe in analytical waters.[11] Perhaps one of the dangers of producing mistaken interpretation is rooted in the fact that we often do something akin to analysis, perhaps in the pursuit of another goal, without necessarily understanding it as such or understanding what doing it well demands. Both Dyer and David Bordwell emphasise, from different standpoints on the validity of close reading, the need to reflect upon the value of interpreting film and what one's objectives are; to be aware of the sorts of knowledge it might be expected to yield and to be aware of the good and bad procedures and habits commonly deployed by scholars.[12] One supposes that such injunctions against embarking on an interpretative exercise without reflecting first upon its validity needn't be directed solely at the analyst of film. As previously mentioned, the historical strands of the Projection Project, to take a pertinent example, involve selecting, marshalling and organising numerous primary and secondary materials that require the interpretative skills of the researcher in judging their value and significance. Though the procedures of film analysis differ considerably from those of historical research, the materials

[11] Richard Dyer, 'The Persistence of Textual Analysis', *Kracauer Lectures in Film and Media Theory*, (Winter 2015/16) <http://www.kracauer-lectures.de/en/winter-2015-2016/richard-dyer/>, accessed 13 February 2018.
[12] David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

of historical research hardly require less, in terms of interpretation, than do films.[13] A formulation of Dyer's constitutes an effective defence of interpretation in my view: that in carrying it out we exercise our sensitivity to the meanings the film 'makes available' to us. This isn't to suggest that the possibilities are endless but, rather, that interpretations that claim to be definitive shouldn't be our aim. Another way in which Dyer's formulation is helpful is that it acknowledges the invitations to interpretation that films appear to proffer, whereas Bordwell's polemic leaves one with the general impression that any meaning-making impulse triggered in a scholar is a vice of hers that sloth, and an aversion to academic rigour or the inability to do something scientific instead, bids her indulge. Bordwell's principal complaint about filmic interpretation is that much of it is seemingly unreflective and follows a routine, ingrained set of, sometimes questionable, procedures and rhetorical moves that lack originality even if they are applied to new subjects and claim to be novel.

Dyer also notes that its 'untheorised' status stigmatises close reading in the eyes of those who see their occupation as theory or philosophy, with film acting as a testing ground for these. Perhaps scholars don't perceive themselves to be engaged in interpreting a film as long as it is in service to, and validated by, theory. It is no doubt becoming clear that the present study isn't theoretically led, unless, perhaps, one considers reflexivity and intertextuality to be theories (and intertextuality is sometimes described thus). However, following Bordwell, they seem rather to be 'semantic fields',[14] and as such it is they that provide the ground upon which the film (as opposed to the semantic fields) are tested so that a question one might ask is whether the film is reflexive

[13] Dyer makes the point that contextual, extra-filmic 'evidence' is hardly more transparent than films themselves.
[14] Bordwell, p. 105.

and in what way, rather than whether the film proves that reflexivity is a plausible concept. Although reflexivity is one of the semantic fields Bordwell singles out as ripe for abuse by film critics, one can justifiably deem reflexive films that 'take reflexivity as part of their referential and explicit meanings' such as *A Star Is Born* (George Cukor, 1954).[15]

VF Perkins' rejoinder to Bordwell's *Making Meaning* opens with a passage of analysis of a brief scene from *Caught* (Max Ophüls, 1949).[16] The analysis helps to highlight that Bordwell's apprehension of interpretation – as, crudely, an exercise in making films mean something or discovering hidden meanings buried within them – effectively disregards Perkins' own practice.[17] As Perkins says, his analysis of *Caught* refers to what is 'filmed' and contains nothing that one mightn't observe in one's own viewing.[18] He therewith shows that interpretation is inherent to the attempt to describe, or to account for, the film's complexities. In this way, it may precede description. To observe that Perkins' analytical skill is rooted in the niceties of his description is in no way to downplay it because he approaches the conveyance in prose of a film's subtleties and intricacies as no mean problem.[19] Accordingly, Perkins' sensitivity is highly productive in terms of the insights his analysis affords. Moreover, the analyses included in Perkins' article illustrate that interpretation needn't involve, or be reduced to, unearthing hidden meanings or messages. He likewise questions Bordwell's distinction between a film's implicit and explicit meanings, which is the basis for Bordwell's modelling of interpretation as a safe-cracking type of exercise which aims to recover concealed or 'implicit'

---

[15] Ibid., p. 112.
[16] VF Perkins, 'Must We Say What They Mean? Film Criticism and Interpretation', *Movie* 34-5 (Winter 1990), pp. 1-6.
[17] Ibid., p. 3.
[18] Ibid., p. 4.
[19] Ibid.

elements. By means of *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939) Perkins shows that a film's 'message' or explicit meaning can be undercut by elements that are equally present, even if they are overshadowed. For example, the portrayal of life in Kansas (as one of Dorothy's victimisation by Miss Gulch and emotional neglect by her family) seems directly to contradict what Bordwell designates the film's explicit meaning, that 'there's no place like home'.[20] Perkins complicates the notion that the message of *The Wizard of Oz* is that 'there's no place like home' without retrieving a subtext and proves that 'non-obvious' meanings aren't necessarily hidden.[21]

Perkins' overall project is to demonstrate the partiality and limitations of Bordwell's model of interpretative practice. He argues that privileging some elements of the film as interpretative cues ignores that almost any element is potentially significant and that, to some degree, what seems meaningful might even change over time.[22] Rather than seek out cues, our task instead is to observe and judge how filmic elements are held in balance or relation to one another; how they are shaded or graded in terms of prominence and what those gradations suggest. Interpretation thus involves exercising judgement in relation to what one observes, and does the film considerably less violence than making or imposing meaning. Perkins agrees with Bordwell that films shouldn't be regarded merely as relaying messages nor that their meaning necessarily resides in such messages, but he refutes the suggestion that he is guilty of this. He argues that Bordwell imposes terms of engagement he considers problematic upon the analyst without taking account of all that critics do apart from making meaning. Perkins' titular question, 'must we say what they mean?'

[20] Ibid., p. 2.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., p. 5.

contests Bordwell's imposition of certain tasks on interpretative practice. We don't have to discover meanings; we can, rather, discover 'the complexity of cinematic expression' in the films we select for attention.[23] This complexity itself then becomes suggestive, as I hope to demonstrate in my own analyses. As a small point, it is surely deliberate that Perkins deploys his habitual precision and sensitivity as weapons in dismantling elegantly, yet persistently, certain key premises upon which Bordwell's polemic rests.

Perkins concludes on a pertinent note as far as I am concerned when he locates the trigger for his analysis of the sequence from *Caught* in the feelings engendered in him by the scene in question. Like Dyer, Perkins thus understands interpretation as conditioned by affect as well as intellect and when he says that 'The evidence of feeling demands an acknowledged place in the process of interpretation'[24] he evokes a motif of the present study and of my own analysis: that of the relationship between the film and the audience and how a film is received. What Perkins describes is surely an animus for many of us who choose film as an object of study. I entered film studies primarily because I believed that it was the seat of the study of films and that films were sufficient as objects of study: their art, aesthetics, affects, achievements and the meanings they make available, as well as their histories, industries, production, stars and the theories and philosophies that pertain to them. I had no notion of, or interest in, using it as a means to branch out into philosophy or the study of cognitive processes. One cannot, in my view, pre-emptively dismiss interpretative endeavours on the grounds that the scholar hasn't theory as a putative safeguard against, or antidote to, bad analysis.

[23] Ibid., p. 2.
[24] Ibid., p. 6.

Corpus selection

The corpus is constituted of films set in cinemas. They take us to the movies and confine us, for substantial portions of the narrative, to the spaces of the auditorium, projection booth or other parts of the exhibition space such as the screen, foyer and even, in one or two cases, the toilets. A couple of my selected films were produced when it was unthinkable that they might be seen in any other scenario but one of public projection, whereas most were made in the knowledge that cinema attendance was generally waning and TV or home viewing might be a wider channel to an audience than theatrical exhibition. They are also united in the fact that the projectionist is at least one of the leading characters, if not the main protagonist, and it is most often the case that he is the hero around whom the film is constructed. In this connection, it feels imperative to include in a study of the projectionist in cinema the two films that most readily seem to spring to the minds of people when such a figure is mooted, *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, 1924) and *Cinema Paradiso*. If the projectionist in cinema were felt to have reached iconic status, it would surely be through the image of Keaton or of Philippe Noiret.

My corpus texts are set in the present even if, as is the case in *Cinema Paradiso*, much of the narrative takes the form of a flashback to an earlier era. The contemporary settings are consistent with the idea that the films are concerned with the precarity of the exhibition apparatus in their present and future. As will emerge through the individual case studies, attention to the deployment of films within the film is a key element of my methodology. That is to say, I pay close attention to explicit quotations of other films within the frame text, which generally occur when the diegetic projectionist projects a film. I am particularly interested in how these other films inflect the portrayal of exhibition

and reception or heighten its problematic aspects. As well as the two archetypal projectionist movies named above, my major case studies are *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (Edwin S Porter, 1902), *The Projectionist* (Harry Hurwitz, 1971), *The Smallest Show on Earth* (Basil Dearden, 1957), *Coming Up Roses* (*Rhosyn a Rhith*) (Stephen Bayly, 1986), *Kings of the Road* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*) (Wim Wenders, 1976) and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (*Bu san*) (Tsai Ming-liang, 2003). Minor examples also appear by way of comparison but don't command substantial analysis and these include *Splendor* (Ettore Scola, 1989) and *A Useful Life* (*La vida útil*) (Federico Veiroj, 2010). My text selections are therefore governed, not by filmmaking epoch or national cinema, but by the broad thematic stipulation that they are cinema-centric and that the projectionist is an important character.

There hasn't been any conscious endeavour to select films according to genre, however, many, though not all, are comedy-dramas. Given that my initial research was cross-generic, this suggests that the theme of the precarity of theatrical exhibition and its apparatus lends itself to exploitation for comedic or dramatic effect. In connection with genre, it should also be noted that a significant proportion of the corpus texts haven't enjoyed a wide theatrical release but have usually, instead, garnered critical attention on the film-festival circuit. This suggests that through their virtual explorations of theatrical exhibition they address the film buff and her cinephilia. The parameters described aim to yield a coherent subset of films for a full-length study. My selection criteria facilitate the juxtaposition of films that tend normally to be dealt with in relation to their national cinemas and, within that, to the oeuvres of their makers. For example, in the present study *The Smallest Show on Earth* will not only be regarded as British cinema but in relation to films about Italian cinema.

Thus it is hoped that the new context or set of relationships into which I bring the films proves a dynamic and productive frame of reference through which I might pursue the lines of enquiry already mooted.

The Last Showing might be a questionable omission from my corpus since it deals, as described above, with a projectionist's failure to cope with the switch from the projection of celluloid to digital. Yet the switch principally provides a motive for the projectionist to wreak revenge on his employers by attempting to murder a young, white, straight couple of twenty-somethings who are the sole attendees of a late-night movie. Although one of the film's achievements is to render the multiplex a sinister space, and although it makes spectacular use of the platter system of celluloid projection as the means of killing the manager who banishes the projectionist from his former domain, the multiplex is, predominantly, a fresh and unusual setting for a horror. It provides a narratively plausible set of novel devices through which a psychopath might pursue his quarry. The wider implications for cinema of the switch to digital aren't raised by *The Last Showing* as a set of concerns beyond the triggering effect on the projectionist. Rather, it is one of the homicidal potentialities the contemporary multiplex offers and which the film exploits. To this extent, *The Last Showing* is of very marginal interest to my enquiry.

As far as my corpus is concerned, digital projection doesn't exist. DCPs weren't yet ubiquitous when the most recent film I refer to in the main body of the thesis, *A Useful Life*, was made in 2010. Indeed, I am only aware of one other fiction film, apart from *The Last Showing*, which depicts a projection box with the capacity for digital projection: *Mr Bean's Holiday* (Steve Bendelack, 2007). The film's protagonist, Mr Bean (Rowan Atkinson), attaches a camcorder to what seems to be a digital projector in the booth at the Cannes

Film Festival and overrides the rather self-important celluloid art film premiered by Willem Dafoe's pompous director, which is running from a 'cake stand' platter system. Furthermore, from *The Smallest Show on Earth* onwards, cinema's principal rivals within my corpus films, when allusions to them are made, are TV and VHS. *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* and *A Useful Life* were made in the current century, but neither identifies or refers to cinema's usurpers. As far as I can discover, no Cinema-Paradiso-for-the-digital-age (as opposed to a documentary) has been issued on general release or made widely available, which might consider, in a serious or sustained way, the effect of the digital turn on cinemagoing. Even *A Useful Life*, which was made in 2010 on the cusp of the switch from celluloid to digital projection, and which tells the story of the closure of a Montevideo arthouse cinema, blames the poor business sense of the cinephiles who run it rather than gesturing towards the internet, downloading, streaming or digital platforms like Netflix as possible culprits for the decline in their cinema's patronage. The film might only be said to point in these directions by omission, since those managing the failing cinema persist in using analogue appliances like cassette recorders and landlines or payphones, as if they are oblivious to the digital age.

Goodbye, Dragon Inn is a twenty-first century film I study in more depth, but it may have been made somewhat too early to depict, or to be much concerned with, modern developments either in screen practices or those of cinemagoing. *The Projectionist* reproduces a late-1960s cityscape saturated with moving and still images emanating from a range of media. Similarly, *Splendor*, a film to which I occasionally refer, and *Cinema Paradiso* both contain characters who refer to TV's contribution to film dissemination and film culture. However, other instances of intermediality are beyond the chronology of the

corpus such as the impact of the internet on filmgoing, the watching of movies on mobile and handheld devices, the use of the cinema to screen theatrical events and performances and the screening of film in public venues other than the cinema. Cinemagoing-related issues like phone, internet and social media use in the auditorium, or piracy-related activity, are likewise beyond the historical scope of the corpus. It would in many ways be apt if the projectionist were absent from a film that represented the implications of the digital age for the culture of moving images since he is now redundant. I am unaware, however, of any thoughtful attempt to address such issues in fiction film.

There are many films excluded from my corpus in which one of the leading protagonists works as a projectionist. These include *Fight Club* (David Fincher, 1999), *Bulletproof Monk* (Paul Hunter, 2003), *Desperately Seeking Susan* (Susan Seidelman, 1985), *The Family Way* (John Boulting; Roy Boulting, 1966), *Clash by Night* (Fritz Lang, 1952) and *Obselidia* (Diane Bell, 2010). I have grouped the above together because although they each contain scenes in the projection box that are sometimes memorable, they unfold largely outside of the cinema and the fact that one of the heroes is a projectionist would appear to be of secondary or indeterminate importance. If my project mainly consisted in examining the projectionist as a type of personality, such films might then be as useful as the objects of study I have selected. *Obselidia* is highly unusual in that its projectionist-protagonist is female. A second example of the female projectionist, and the only other one of which I am aware, is another film often cited in response to the enquiry after movies that feature projectionists, *Inglourious Basterds* (Quentin Tarantino, 2009). Shosanna (Mélanie Laurent), who projects but who also manages the cinema and is white and Jewish, colludes with the actual projectionist, Marcel (Jacky Ido), who is black.

Together they use the apparatus of cinematic exhibition to devastating effect on a group of prominent Nazis, including Hitler, whose whiteness and maleness are, one assumes, among the most highly prized facets of their identity. Once again, if my project were more concerned with the persona of the projectionist such examples would, along with *Gas Food Lodging* (Allison Anders, 1992), in which the projectionist is a Mexican boy, form a counterpoint to the far more common representation of the white male projectionist in American and European cinema. My corpus contains nothing – in its western-made films – to challenge the stereotype of the projectionist as a white man. To that extent *Inglourious Basterds*, *Obselidia* and *Gas Food Lodging* might have added an extra dimension to arguments about the projectionist's visibility, since they help to make the stereotype of the projectionist, in terms of gender and race, visible.

The delineation and defence of my corpus points up certain paths not taken, and one might have examined the projectionist in the film about political strife or war and its aftermath of which there are a surprising number. Indeed, *Cinema Paradiso* and *Splendor* might be counted among them and, of course, *Inglourious Basterds*. Others include *Here Is Your Life* (*Här har du ditt liv*) (Jan Troell, 1966), *The Spirit of the Beehive* (*El espíritu de la colmena*) (Victor Erice, 1973), *Man of Marble* (*Człowiek z marmaru*) (Andrzej Wajda, 1977), *Wish You Were Here* (David Leland, 1987), *Come See the Paradise* (Alan Parker, 1990), *The Inner Circle* (Andrei Konchalovsky, 1991), *The Majestic* (Frank Darabont, 2001), *Cartouches gauloises* (Mehdi Charef, 2007) and *Katyń* (Andrzej Wajda, 2007). Similarly, the phenomenon of the invasion of the projection booth, and the injury or killing of the projectionist, might have proved productive inasmuch as it occurs relatively often. That potential corpus might have included *The Blob* (Irvin Yeaworth, 1958), *The Tingler* (William Castle, 1959), *Targets* (Peter

Bogdanovich, 1968), *Gremlins* (Joe Dante, 1984), *Gremlins 2* (Joe Dante, 1990) and *Mr Bean's Holiday*, though, as we will see, the contested space of the projection box – who is allowed in and who 'invades' – is an issue in several films of my actual corpus.

Had I chosen to base my study exclusively on the representation of the projectionist in British cinema, I would have had several examples upon which to draw across genres, eras and varying degrees of the projectionist's narrative presence. While *The Smallest Show on Earth*, *Coming Up Roses* and *The Last Showing* dedicate much of their narratives to projectionists who are seen working as projectionists for much of the duration of their respective films, there are numerous others that contain one or two sequences in a projection box such as *Stop Press Girl* (Michael Barry, 1949), *The Magic Box* (John Boulting, 1951), *The Family Way*, *Casino Royale* (Ken Hughes et al, 1967), *Eskimo Nell* (Martin Campbell, 1975), *Quadrophenia* (Franc Roddam, 1979), *Wish You Were Here*, *Mr Bean's Holiday* and *Berberian Sound Studio* (Peter Strickland, 2012) among others.

There are tens of other films in which projectionists feature which I haven't mentioned. However, the above sample suggests that the projectionist is a figure cinema regularly renders visible. Recent Hollywood films such as *Carol* (Todd Haynes, 2015) and *The Nice Guys* (Shane Black, 2016) continue to include scenes with projectionists and projection booths so that, even now that the projection of celluloid is largely a thing of the past, cinema hasn't yet left it in the past. This suggests that my compilation of films with projectionists is a list which will continue to grow. So ubiquitous is the projectionist in movies that any scholar undertaking the present study could have produced a corpus, or even several, that differed from mine. Yet I am convinced that isolating films set in

cinemas which devote narrative time to the projectionist hero, as I have done, accords a comprehensible logic and is preferable to trying to discover coherence in disparate sets of films with varying degrees of projectionist involvement based on, for example, where or when they were produced. Aside from the parameters I have already given for my selections, the lucidity of my corpus will rely for its proof on my analyses and findings.

Structure of chapters

The main body of the present study is divided into three chapters. The first of these, entitled 'The projectionist and the slapstick screen', accommodates three American films with projectionist characters: *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*, *Sherlock Jr.* and *The Projectionist*, which are all slapstick films to some degree. While *Uncle Josh* and *Sherlock Jr.* are indubitably of the genre, *The Projectionist* contains lengthy sequences styled as such though it isn't a slapstick film in its entirety. The chapter considers the projectionist of American slapstick and argues that its movie theatres are sites of negotiation with, or outright resistance to, the classical narrative system. If we see the classical narrative system as a way in which film commits to clarity, legibility and therewith attempts to instil the audience's absorption, the projectionist-rubes of these three films highlight other forms of spectatorship by modelling a reactive, lively and engaged audience. However, this audience, across all three examples, is concentrated in the person of the rube-projectionist. The second and third chapters depart from this lone spectator and include audience representations made up of minor characters that form constituencies and collectives that answer more obviously to a 'world-of-the-audience' descriptor.

The second chapter, entitled, 'Between earth and paradise: projectionists in *The Smallest Show on Earth*, *Coming Up Roses* and *Cinema Paradiso*', focuses on the relationships between the institutions of cinema and the wider social and political contexts within which they exist. *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Cinema Paradiso* are both concerned, too, with how cinema shapes, and is shaped by, its audiences and how the projection of films within the larger film expresses the social significance of practices such as screening films and attending the cinema.

The case studies explored in the final chapter, entitled '"This theatre is haunted by ghosts"', are *Kings of the Road* and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*. In both films the respective projectionists and cinemagoers are depicted, in very different ways, as being as ghostly and insubstantial as their counterparts: the figures on screen. A related parallel between the two films is their documentation of actual movie theatres passing into history, as will be explained within the individual analyses. They are also interested in ways of seeing, questions of what is seen and unseen and both use experimental forms to link cinema and human perception. The persistence of cinema per se, and the impoverishment of human vision as a result of cinemagoing's declining popularity, are concepts that seem to lie behind each, as I aim to demonstrate.

Several questions guide the study and its constituent parts. How is the projectionist positioned in relation to the film, the cinematic apparatus and the audience? Is the projectionist character deployed in order to embody modes of spectatorship and how? To what extent and in what ways can he be seen as embodying the filmmaker? What are the functions and significance of films 'screened' within the film? To what extent and in what ways do films which

reflect specifically upon exhibition extend, enrich or complicate debates around reflexivity?

The 'interpretive optic' through which I examine a set of movies concerned with the projectionist doesn't seek to impose, limit or impoverish their meanings.[25] Rather, it raises the way we view and interpret images as a kind of problem. If, as Bordwell suggests, 'To understand a film interpretively is to subsume it to our conceptual schemes, and thus to master them more fully, if only tacitly', the aim of my textual analysis is to facilitate a fuller mastery of reflexivity.[26] The movies with which I am concerned excavate the relationship between film and audiences; the processes and issues concerned with screening film theatrically; the ways in which one might view movies; the relationship between cinema and human perception and with ways of seeing politically and philosophically. I argue that the projectionist-protagonist facilitates access to such issues.

[25] Bordwell, p. 260.
[26] Ibid., p. 257.

Review of the literature
Reflexivity and intertextuality

The films that constitute my corpus are a diverse selection in terms of their historical and geographical spread. The major ones include the American movies *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1902), *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, 1924) and *The Projectionist* (Harry Hurwitz, 1971); European ones like *The Smallest Show on Earth* (Basil Dearden, 1957), *Kings of the Road* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*) (Wim Wenders, 1976) and *Cinema Paradiso* (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*) (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988) and a Taiwanese one, *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (*Bu san*) (Tsai Ming-liang, 2003). Despite their various provenances, the films have much in common at the level of narrative content. They each feature a projectionist prominently and they also recreate the cinema as a diegesis. It isn't beyond the bounds of possibility that, as these films take us through the spaces of the diegetic movie theatre, we, too, are watching from seats in a cinema auditorium. It may occur to us to appreciate the differences between the two exhibition venues we 'inhabit' simultaneously when we watch such films in an environment of commercial exhibition. Yet even when we view a movie that takes us to the cinema in a home-viewing scenario or in a variation upon that, its reflexivity – its reflecting upon where, how and why films are shown and watched – is obvious.

My non-American corpus films routinely feature in studies of the national cinemas to which they belong. In concert with their geographical and historical situations, they are often examined as works of the auteurs whose productions help to form the contours of national cinema. I will take such literature into account when it seems relevant to do so in the individual chapters. However,

aside from *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* and *Sherlock Jr.*, my corpus films don't tend to be as well represented in current literature on reflexivity, even though all case studies clearly reflect upon the exhibition of film. The present study therefore brings the films into relationship with those that wouldn't routinely be considered proximate to them. It is hoped that what emerges are telling and productive connections regarding what cinema has to say about exhibition (including distribution), about film reception and spectatorship, and about what is at stake when movies are screened and viewed.

Aside from the fact that reflexivity is evident in my corpus films at the level of narrative, and that reflexive elements such as the projectionist, audience and exhibition venue, are common to all of the films I examine, I situate my work primarily in that field for the important reason that the films with which I am concerned depict diegetic film screenings. One of the research questions set out in the introduction establishes that I will investigate the film in the film and the diegetic screening. I will compare and contrast them to the frame film in which they are contained to ascertain whether and how dynamics between films in films and frame films might be productive in terms of a reflection upon exhibition and related issues.

The second field to which the present study relates is that of what is usually called 'intertextuality'. As we will see, films often incorporate allusions or gestures of homage or cinephilia, which speak to the filmmaker's historical and authorial influences, and which distinguish sections of the audience from each other according to levels of competence, with some feeling they recognise moments of reference or homage and others failing to perceive them. In addition, several of my corpus films are concerned to locate their diegeses within certain kinds of geopolitical landscape that aren't simply significant in

terms of the world of the audience to which they relate, but are also interesting vantage points from which to look back at both cultural and film history by means of quotation or allusion.

The significance of cinema and what is at stake when films are exhibited or not is an issue for most of my corpus films and it links reflexivity and intertextuality. Several films interrogate the stability of exhibition apparatus, and even that of distribution, so that the precarity of screening becomes a theme. As such they reflect, too, upon the instability of film and audience as well. In terms of intertextuality, the prospect of loss or threat to cinema – or exhibition in crisis – can trigger homage and the invocation of auteur cinema as a way of reminding us, through canonical examples, of our cultural heritage, of the heights to which the artform might potentially rise and what we risk losing.

The present study has little interest in the projectionist as a social type. Hence it isn't an examination of cinematic 'images of' the projectionist which might be understood as according him[1] social or political functions and meanings beyond those conferred by his relationship with film.[2] As mentioned in my introduction, David Rosenbaum's 1975 article, which investigates real projectionists in the Boston area, encapsulates the characteristics one might associate with men who work in a rather closed-off environment by making his theme the projectionist-as-troll.[3] The viewing of a number of films suggests that the projectionist character is, accordingly, often isolated, antisocial, sexually dysfunctional, psychologically complex or mentally ill. This suggests that one might explore crises of masculinity through him and perhaps draw parallels with

[1] N. 1 of the introduction explains my use of the male pronoun with regards to the projectionist in cinema.
[2] Richard Dyer, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 1.
[3] David Rosenbaum, 'The Industry: Trysting with Trolls', *Film Comment* 11:3 (May-June 1975), pp. 36-7.

an exhibition industry in crisis as well. One could conceive of research that allowed the projectionist character to join the likes of the male detective[4] or police officer,[5] the war veteran[6] or the cowboy[7] as a figure through which 'screening the male'[8] might become further nuanced, particularly since the projectionist's visibility or corporeality are sometimes ambiguous. Though certain tropes emerge through the portraits of projectionists yielded by my analyses, they only become my concern when they are relevant to his position in the cinematic apparatus and how that maps onto larger power structures. In other words, the tropes are interesting in relation to the projectionist-as-viewer or as-film-producer. However, I don't seek to position my study alongside those that consider the representation of professions, ethnic or racial stereotypes, social class or what Paul Loukides and Linda K Fuller call 'idiosyncratic types' such as 'the (wise)-cracking girl's best friend', the heavy or the murdering mother.[9] In the review that follows, existing studies in the fields of reflexivity and intertextuality are my focus. A great deal of the scholarly work on both reflexivity and intertextuality exists in the form of the analysis of individual films. I will address such literature within the chapters as it seems relevant to the films I consider.

---

[4] Philippa Gates, *Detecting Men: Masculinity and the Hollywood Detective Film* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).
[5] Robert Reiner, '"Keystone to Kojak: The Hollywood Cop"', in Philip Davies and Brian Neve (eds), *Cinema, Politics, and Society in America* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 195-220.
[6] Emmett Early, *The War Veteran in Film* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003).
[7] Steven Cohan, '"The Gay Cowboy Movie": Queer Masculinity on Brokeback Mountain', in Christine Gledhill (ed.), *Gender Meets Genre in Postwar Cinemas* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), pp. 233-42.
[8] Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (eds), *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993).
[9] Paul Loukides and Linda K Fuller (eds), *Beyond the Stars: Stock Characters in American Popular Film* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University, 1990).

Reflexivity in film

The French journal *CinémAction* devotes a complete number to filmic reflexivity in 2007. As far as my project is concerned, a highly pertinent contribution to this issue examines how films make their way into other films. Nicolas Schmidt argues, as I do, that films in film perform critical functions, whether they take the form of excerpts of previously made films which exist autonomously of the frame film, or whether they are fictive productions created alongside it. They have the potential to reorient the reception of, or the popular or critical evaluations (or re-evaluations) of, the larger film.[10] Although Schmidt is preoccupied by films narratively concerned with filmmaking rather than cinemagoing, his approach, like mine, is to pay close attention to the relationships between the film in the film and the frame film: to the stories, histories or (auto)biographies they each relate. Instances of a film's portrayal in another film may give rise to different associated conceptions. The mise en abyme may represent a work of the same nature as the larger one. He also sees the cinematographic processes films in films entail as reflexive in themselves. For example, the montage that integrates the clips reflects upon film's construction from images and shots. In terms of aesthetics, the fictive creation might appear 'grafted' on, as if it were a quotation, but the frames and thresholds we perceive all exist at the level of the shot composed to yield that effect. The presence of a fictive film made to appear grafted on in this manner both belies the fact that it originated in the same way as the frame film but, at the same time, points to the constructed nature of both films.[11]

[10] Nicolas Schmidt, 'Les Usages du Procédé de Film dans le Film', *CinémAction* 124 (May 2007), pp. 102-12.
[11] Ibid., p. 104.

A significant proportion of the rest of the articles in the *CinémAction* number are concerned with what Thomas Elsaesser calls '*modernist*-auteurist *reflexivity*' in his chapter in *The Persistence of Hollywood*.[12] One iteration of this reflexivity is the way, for example, that cinema is a metaphor in the films of auteurs like Fritz Lang or Alfred Hitchcock. Moreover, such films 'generally instantiate their subject matter also in their own form and mode of address'.[13] For example, in a Douglas Sirk melodrama, characters reflected in mirrors provide moments of self-reflection for the film itself when it may be said to comment upon its mirroring of real life or its status as image, among other things. Any distinctions in the reflexive qualities of films examined as modernist-auteurist works are matters of degree. Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954) is more reflexive than Sirk's *All That Heaven Allows* (1955) because it presents an allegory of cinema spectatorship, whereas the latter merely alludes to it. However, Vincente Minnelli's *The Bad and the Beautiful* (1952) and Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960) are reflexive to a higher degree still because filmmaking constitutes their subject matter.

An alternative way to approach questions of reflexivity to that outlined above is to set out to identify its multiple modes or, as Elsaesser does, to 'revise and extend' the concept to make it functional as an interrogational tool outside of individual texts.[14] In Gloria Withalm's chapter within a volume published in 2007 on self-reference in the media she proposes 'a model … to cover the entire range of self-reflexive textual strategies and practices' in film.[15] While

[12] Thomas Elsaesser, *The Persistence of Hollywood* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), p. 330. The italics are his.
[13] Ibid., p. 331.
[14] Ibid., p. 330.
[15] Gloria Withalm, 'The Self-Reflexive Screen: Outlines of a Comprehensive Model', in Winfried Nöth and Nina Bishara (eds), *Self-Reference in the Media* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), p. 125.

she acknowledges that it is valid to analyse the reflexivity of individual texts, the starting point for her taxonomy is that a film has a 'double nature' as '*a text* which is always and necessarily embedded in *film as a sociocultural (and economic) system*' and she asserts that 'both aspects are the basis of self-referential and self-reflexive discourses and stories'.[16] One of the implications of this is that Withalm's model only admits texts that are reflexive at the level of narrative in that they contain referents to commercial filmmaking and to the production-distribution-exhibition cycle 'from shooting to showing'.[17] So not only is there no place for *All That Heaven Allows* or *Rear Window*, but of the four examples mentioned it is only clear that *The Bad and the Beautiful*, which indeed she names, is reflexive for her purposes. How useful or apposite *Peeping Tom*'s amateur filmmaking would be in her subcategory of films about production is questionable because it doesn't mirror film as an entity circulating or functioning within a sociocultural or economic system.

Withalm approaches self-reference as a semiotician who sees films as signs of, or as pointing to, the systems that created them and within which they themselves function. Although my work isn't concerned with films as systems of signification or communication, Withalm's taxonomy is useful in helping to clarify the niche that the films I study carve out within the terrain of filmic reflexivity. My selection of films is based upon their seeming awareness of the role of theatrical exhibition, cinemagoing and what Withalm calls "the world of the audience" in how film functions within culture.[18]

Although Withalm names several European films in the course of setting out her model, it is no surprise that Hollywood productions are as well, if not

[16] Ibid., p. 129. The italics are hers.
[17] Ibid., p. 128.
[18] Ibid., p. 135.

better represented, given that her major interest is in films as systems. When she says that 'movies about movie making [are] often labeled film-in-film or Hollywood on Hollywood [films]' she implies that self-referential films are synonymous with reflexive Hollywood productions and it could be that Hollywood as a filmmaking system par excellence underpins this.[19] Indeed, just as there are endless instances of Hollywood films that can be said to reflect upon Hollywood in different ways and to varying degrees, a substantial proportion of the literature on reflexivity in film is trained exclusively on Hollywood.

In his book, Elsaesser attempts to account for Hollywood's 'longevity of nearly a hundred years'.[20] In a different way to Withalm, he is also concerned with how films relate, or point, to systems. Both the book and a recent article, 'The Hollywood Turn: Persistence, Reflexivity, Feedback', are premised on a distinction between classical Hollywood narrative or "the film as system" and the "film industry as system". He argues that reflexivity closes a gap he identifies between the two systems; between Hollywood film as a narrative practice and Hollywood itself as an 'economic-industrial practice'. In the course of this he enlarges the concept by identifying several types of reflexivity:

> … first the 'modernist' self-reference to media-specificity, originally associated with the director and the auteur theory; second the self-reference of the industry as a whole, manifest on the one hand in a persistent concern with self-regulation (Hays Code), and on the other, with annual rituals of self-celebration (the Academy Awards); third the self-reference of the individual studios, in the form of intellectual property rights protection, logo management and branding; and fourth the self-reference and recursiveness established through the circuits of promotion and audience research that bind producers to consumers and regulate reception of a given film as story, event and experience (via

[19] Ibid., p. 131.
[20] Elsaesser, *The Persistence of Hollywood*, p. 319.

> poster, tagline, advertising, press coverage, webpage, teasers and trailers).[21]

Like other scholars, Elsaesser allows that a film's reflexivity might be revelatory of the auteur's struggle against the Hollywood system. However, his expansion of reflexivity to encompass extra-textual activities like awards or censorship highlights another struggle: between Hollywood films and the audience. In other words, in the form of the self-congratulation of the Academy awards or the self-regulation of the Hays Code, Hollywood's tendency to reflect upon itself has been key to its endurance in terms of maintaining an audience. As I hope to show, Elsaesser's identification of the audience as an important antagonist in Hollywood's history is borne out in my own case studies.

Scholars frequently observe an ever increasing tendency of films, and of other media, to reflexivity. The title of Elsaesser's article, which begins with 'the Hollywood turn', is a kind of double entendre that not only refers to reflexivity but hints that it is a recent trend. However, the article itself elucidates that the Hollywood turn is a perennial impulse manifesting in various ways from the silent era onwards. Withalm's 2007 chapter is contextualised by the volume's introduction in which Winfried Nöth observes that, 'In an era in which everything seems to have been said … literature, the visual and the audiovisual arts and media have become increasingly self-referential, self-reflexive, autotelic.'[22] As far as the reflexivity of Hollywood film is concerned, scholars including Marion Gymnich and Frank Pilipp note a marked intensification in the 1990s.[23] Writing

---

[21] Thomas Elsaesser, 'The Hollywood Turn: Persistence, Reflexivity, Feedback', *Screen* 58:2 (Summer 2017), p. 238.
[22] Winfried Nöth and Nina Bishara (eds), *Self-Reference in the Media* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 2007), p. 3.
[23] In Marion Gymnich, 'Meta-Film und Meta-TV: Möglichkeiten und Funktionen von Metaisierung in Filmen und Fernsehserien', in Janine Hauthal (ed.), *Metaisierung in Literatur und anderen Medien* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), pp. 127-54 and in Frank Pilipp, 'Creative Incest: Cross- and

in 1999, Pilipp's article enumerates an abundance of contemporary films that parody, spoof or otherwise comedically or ironically refer to other Hollywood films or filmmaking genres. This 'creative incest' makes the Hollywood film a self-sufficient universe that refers exclusively to itself and omits to fictionalise extra-Hollywood reality. He fears the consequence will be that Hollywood representations substitute represented reality with what Robert Stam calls 'the referentless world of the simulacrum'.[24] Pilipp sees increasing reflexivity in Hollywood film as a negligent or antagonistic gesture, rather than a conciliatory one, as far as the audience is concerned. Once again, but in a different way to Elsaesser, he considers reflexivity primarily in terms of how it functions in the relationship between film and audience.

The overarching endeavour of Christopher Ames' 1997 full-length study, *Movies about the Movies*, is to interrogate the cultural significance of both Hollywood and the Hollywood movie. Once again, the reflexivity of the latter contributes to the discovery of Hollywood's meanings in the wider world. As part of his introduction, Ames considers Hollywood in its extended cultural meanings when he mentions, for example, its relationship to the American Dream or its promotion of aspirational, Californian lifestyles.[25]

Ames dedicates a chapter to 'screen passages' largely constituted of analyses of two movies that exploit the 'metaphor of movies as dreams', *The Purple Rose of Cairo* and *Last Action Hero*.[26] In these movies, as in *Sherlock Jr.*, diegetic audience members over-identify with movies and cross from the

---

Self-Referencing in Recent Hollywood Cinema', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 27:1 (1999), pp. 55-64.

[24] Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), p. xvi.

[25] Christopher Ames, *Movies about the Movies: Hollywood Reflected* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), pp. 7 and 12.

[26] Ibid., p. 110.

world of the audience to the world of the movie. If movies are metaphors for dreams, Ames seems to conclude that Hollywood is a metaphor for, or perhaps a collection of pictorial representations of, the American Dream which, in turn, is intimately bound up, as one of its founding myths, with American self-representation. Yet this supposed indoctrination is complicated by screen-passage movies among other kinds of reflexive film. As Ames says, 'Hollywood fiction becomes imaginative criticism when it recognizes that the screen looks both ways: it projects images and it reflects the projected fantasies of individual viewers'.[27] Ames excavates the '"contradiction[s]," "tension[s]," "paradox[es]," and "ambivalence"' that surround Hollywood movies as both the pedlars of American myths and, occasionally (and especially in the case of reflexive movies), a filmic means of their critique or revelation as constructed and illusory.[28]

In Christian Metz's book, *Impersonal Enunciation, or the Place of Film*, which was published in 1991 and translated into English in 2016, he observes that the source of the film's narrative, its narrating voice – or 'enunciation' – is normally effaced in classical narrative cinema.[29] It is discoverable, however, in 'landscapes of enunciation' constituted by reflexive practices and devices such as, among others, 'secondary screens'[30] and 'film(s) within film'.[31] Departing from Francesco Casetti's linguistics-based theorisations of the 'I' and the 'you' of the film,[32] Metz proposes that reflexive devices are impersonal instantiations, markers or sites of enunciation. For example, a depicted cinema screen, as an

[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid., p. 226.
[29] Christian Metz, *Impersonal Enunciation, or the Place of Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).
[30] Ibid., pp. 52-9.
[31] Ibid., pp. 71-88.
[32] Francesco Casetti, *Inside the Gaze: The Fiction Film and Its Spectator* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

internal or second frame, 'has the effect of drawing attention to the main frame, that is to say, to the site … of enunciation, of which it is, among other things, a frequent and recognizable "marker"'.[33]

Another 'landscape of enunciation' discussed is when the film "expos[es] the apparatus" or depicts it. Metz's quotation marks refer to the fact that the apparatus shown isn't normally that with which the film is being made, and he talks of a camera's only means of self-representation being its filming itself in a mirror.[34] It almost goes without saying that what is true of the camera in this case is even truer of the projector, which can only 'appear' or make its presence felt if the film should, for example, chance to break down in exhibition. It isn't surprising that Metz omits to consider this since it is a haphazard element that can't fall within the film's textual parameters. However, as I discuss within the relevant chapters, one or two of my corpus texts arguably provide something akin to the projector's revealing itself.

A third landscape of enunciation which is relevant to the present study are films within film. Metz formulates three subcategories of these distinguished by their 'degrees … of enunciative force',[35] which correspond to the acuteness of their reflexivity. The first type is a quotation, by which Metz means the straightforward embedding of a film within another. The practice is characterised by its clarity in that it is one 'the spectator recognizes and cannot fail to recognize as quoting'. The 'enunciative intrusion' of such quotations is heightened by 'the dimensions of history and of cinephilia … Examples of true quotations are now very numerous, especially since the cinema has started

[33] Metz, p. 53.
[34] Ibid., p. 64.
[35] Ibid., p. 72.

contemplating itself as a lost object, and feeds on its own interminably commented-upon bereavement'.[36]

Metz dwells longest on his third subcategory, which is constituted of films within film of 'the "strong" forms that the *mise en abyme* can take'.[37] Of Federico Fellini's *8½* (1963), which is an instance he cites of the third type, he says:

> The 'main' film becomes unstuck, separating itself just at the moment when the two films are completed. *The film within the film is the film itself.* The *mise en abyme* structure reaches its full paradoxical force when there is no longer an included film, that is, when the two films, which are *avowedly* distinct, are physically totally confused.[38]

Metz's observation that the degree of 'enunciative force' of films in film increases in line with the extent of their self-reflexivity is suggestive with regards to my study's examination of how films are included within and incorporated into works reflecting on exhibition, reception and spectatorship.

To return briefly to Metz's section on the secondary screen, a captivating passage is on the 'absolutely singular place' of the screen among cinematic apparatus.

> It is the frame and the veil of representation … that which opens and that which closes the gaze … and the thing which displays and which conceals … 'place of not-seeing-everything' ... It is, in other words, inside everyone's imagination and up to a certain point in reality, the place of the film, its emplacement, the place where it happens. It is not by chance that there are so many expressions such as 'to adapt a book for the screen', where the word screen can designate the entirety of the cinema-machine … Other characteristics of the machinery are equally perceptible when the film is being shown … But the screen is more than perceptible, it is – it has become, historically and socially – the condition of and the receptacle for perception.[39]

[36] Ibid., p. 73.
[37] Ibid., p. 80.
[38] Ibid., pp. 80-1.
[39] Ibid., p. 56.

I discuss elsewhere that films about the projectionist and cinemagoing contemplate 'the entirety of the cinema-machine',[40] which grants them access to a wider set of questions than films about filmmaking. This scope, which echoes that attributed to the screen, is also reflected in Metz's closure of his chapter on secondary screens with the observation that, 'They manage … to mimic the very thing that gives them the capacity to be seen, and to transmit a half-lie to us – that it is they that make us see'.[41] Similarly, filmic meditations on what is at stake when films are screened, and on cinema as a mode of perception, form my study's compelling questions.

Much literature on reflexivity in film appears in the 1970s. Three books on Hollywood movies about Hollywood are published within a few years at the end of that decade, though none is highly analytical.[42] They are, in essence, surveys organised alphabetically, chronologically or thematically, which list, describe and evaluate what they frequently label a genre, the movie about Hollywood. In the foreword to *Hollywood on Hollywood*, it is observed that the contemporary movie manifests what appears to be a renewed interest in Hollywood with the release of the likes of *The Day of the Locust* (John Schlesinger, 1975), *The Last Tycoon* (Elia Kazan), *Nickelodeon* (Peter Bogdanovich), *Gable and Lombard* (Sidney J Furie) and *WC Fields and Me* (Arthur Hiller, all 1976).[43] However, no explanation is proffered as to why Hollywood might have become especially reflexive in the 1970s or at any other

[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., p. 59.
[42] Alex Barris, *Hollywood According to Hollywood* (South Brunswick, NJ: AS Barnes, 1978), Rudy Behlmer and Tony Thomas, *Hollywood's Hollywood: The Movies about the Movies* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1975) and James Robert Parish, Michael R Pitts and Gregory W Mank, *Hollywood on Hollywood* (Metuchen; London: Scarecrow Press, 1978).
[43] Parish, Pitts and Mank, p. 1.

time in its history. Rather, the surveys attest to Hollywood's abiding interest in itself from the 1910s onwards. Indeed, *Hollywood on Hollywood* impresses strongly with the number of shorts and features on filmmaking from the silent era it lists. Alex Barris observes that Hollywood's fascination with itself is a consequence of, or at least goes hand-in-hand with, the American public's own curiosity about movie actors and so forth.[44] Through a range of artefacts including the movies it produces, Hollywood forms a diegesis or figurative world that exceeds the films themselves, which are described by Ames as the 'contours' of this alternative reality or fantasy.[45] Thus it becomes clear once again that the cinemagoer is both the instigator and key addressee of Hollywood reflexivity.

Writings of a somewhat more erudite nature also appear in the 1970s. They avowedly respond to the reflexive turns taken by European cineastes like Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman and Jean-Luc Godard. Don Fredericksen categorises multiple functions of reflexivity in Godard's *Wind from the East* (1969) with reference to linguist Roman Jakobson's theorisation of the functions of language.[46] In other words, Godard's modes of reflexivity, indeed, his main interests, pertain to how films communicate meaning. For Fredericksen the 'contemporary importance [of a film like *Wind from the East*] rests primarily on its being central to certain modernist tendencies in significant filmmakers'.[47] Like Fredericksen, William C Siska is interested in Godard's *Wind from the East*, among other modernist films, because its reflexivity – that is to say, its foregrounding of form – challenges the goal of traditional Hollywood narrative

[44] Barris, p. 10.
[45] Ames, p. 3.
[46] Don Fredericksen, 'Modes of Reflexive Film', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 4:3 (Summer 1979), pp. 299-320.
[47] Ibid., p. 299.

cinema to make form invisible. Modernist films '"[unmask]" the Hollywood illusion' even as Hollywood films that purport to do so, like *Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950), maintain it through their invisibility of form or transparency.[48]

Robert Stam introduces his full-length study, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature*, which was published in 1992, by saying that film and literature share a common textual nature 'as discourse; *écriture*', and that reflexivity is a 'tradition' available to both.[49] The book apparently started life as a doctoral thesis in which 'demystification' substitutes the concept of reflexivity.[50] This bespeaks Stam's overarching idea that reflexivity functions to foreground or demystify, and thereby subvert, the conventions of film narrative. Godard's films command considerable attention, but the scope of Stam's analysis also admits more mainstream cases like *Rear Window* and *Sunset Boulevard* on the basis that his interest is in texts that 'operate on the borders between the mainstream and the vanguard' or manifest anti-narrative tendencies.[51] Although the Hollywood examples largely maintain the illusionism exploded by the likes of Godard, the 'gaps and fissures' in this illusionism, or points where it seems to wear thin or break down, make them interesting.[52]

Stam conceives of reflexivity's most significant function as its 'solicit[ing] the active collaboration of [the] reader/spectator'.[53] His first chapter is on 'allegories of spectatorship'. Within it he analyses *Rear Window* at length as such an allegory, but considers other movies about film's engagement of

[48] William C Siska, 'Metacinema: A Modern Necessity', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 7:4 (1979), p. 286.
[49] Stam, p. xi.
[50] Ibid., p. xii.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., p. 89.
[53] Ibid., p. xi.

audiences including *Sherlock Jr.* and *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*. Indeed, he repeatedly attributes reflexivity's function – to highlight the complicity of the audience – to 'authentic reflexivity' as opposed to its 'debased' counterpoint (exemplified by films like *Singin' in the Rain* (Stanley Donen; Gene Kelly, 1952) which take Hollywood as a profilmic milieu but which otherwise maintain its illusionism). In other words, authentic reflexivity is politically motivated to challenge a realism which, according to Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser, is conventional, reactionary and bourgeois.[54]

Several pages of Stam's introduction discuss intertextuality. Its relationship to reflexivity is an implicit concern. *Blazing Saddles* (Mel Brooks, 1974) is one of the movies used to articulate facets of this, but one must read between Stam's lines in order to recognise how he links intertextuality to reflexivity. He says that *Blazing Saddles*' comedic deconstruction of the conventions of the western is predicated on the audience's recognition of such conventions from previous exposure to the genre.[55] This implies that *Blazing Saddles*' openness to external influences and its admission of them, or its intertextuality, fosters or reinforces audience competence. This competence is, in turn, a prerequisite for the audience's appreciation of the film's reflexive and subversive gestures, which are an important source of its humour. In other words, intertextuality facilitates reflexivity and both are indicators of audience competence. This also clarifies that film's intertextual nature becomes functional at the point of viewing (and, as far as the filmmaker is concerned, while the film is in development and production) when it reactivates previously acquired knowledge.

[54] Ibid., pp. 13-6.
[55] Ibid., p. 21.

Countless films deliberately admit other texts or cultural artefacts by means of rhetorical devices like allusion and quotation. Yet such devices also, by implication, seek to delimit a given film's influences. Moreover, the pointing to, and foregrounding of, a text's precursors, counterpoints, influences and so on is, as has already been established by Schmidt, a reflexive strategy: it once again draws attention to film's artifice, to its construction and cultural building blocks. The foregrounding of certain texts as relational or influential seems also to betray an impulse towards modulating or undercutting the very openness characteristic of intertextuality. Seen in this regard, reflexivity is a curb on intertextuality. Apart from the important distinguishing factor that intertextuality is film's inherent nature or state, and reflexivity is a filmmaking practice, an important point of difference is the rhetorical intent behind a film's reflexivity. In contrast, its intertextuality isn't a deliberate part of its design.

Returning to Stam, he acknowledges directors of the French New Wave were keen to flaunt their cinephilia.[56] As far as the audience is concerned, the deployment of devices like allusion or quotation is somewhat divisive in its stratification of them by their differentiated levels of knowledge. The implications of this are developed below. Overall, the literature on filmic reflexivity suggests that, as a practice, it is intimately connected to the audience and to ameliorating what Elsaesser frames as the struggle or potential rupture between films and audiences. As we will see, intertextuality, too, is concerned with such questions.

[56] Ibid.

Filmic intertextuality

In 'Storytelling Intertextuality: From *Django Unchained* to *The Matrix*', Helle Kannik Haastrup emphasises the multiple functions filmic intertextuality performs with regard to conveying narrative.[57] The theoretical starting point for what she labels 'explicit intertextuality' is Gérard Genette's definition of literary intertextuality as a device. She explains:

> The core of Genette's neo-structuralist understanding of literary intertextuality is that intertextuality is defined as a device that only some texts make use of in the shape of a quote or a reference. In this way, it is distanced from the broad understanding of intertextuality as argued by Julia Kristeva and Roland Barthes, i.e. that all texts are intertextual.[58]

In Haastrup's article 'intertextuality' therefore generally refers to a film's explicit inclusion of other films or texts in the form of clearly marked quotations and she is relatively unconcerned with the 'unmarked' allusions viewers mightn't recognise or might overlook.[59] Indeed, she intimates that such implicit intertextuality commands scholarly attention at the expense, perhaps, of the explicit form she conceives as narratively useful. She illustrates how 'explicit intertextuality' works in mainstream Hollywood movies, rather than in those of the arthouse, in order to highlight that intertextuality (as she and Genette define it) is a strategy of audience inclusion rather than one of differentiating between audience competences.[60] Her aim is therefore to complicate the notion that intertextuality is a set of allusions that exist in excess of, or interfere with,

[57] Helle Kannik Haastrup, 'Storytelling Intertextuality: From *Django Unchained* to *The Matrix*', *Film International* 12:67 (2014), pp. 85-97.
[58] Ibid., pp. 86-7. According to Haastrup, Genette's definition is to be found in his book, Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes: La Littérature au second degré* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1982).
[59] Ibid., p. 88.
[60] Ibid.

narrative; that function as *Verfremdung* devices or that segment the audience and distinguish the cinephiles.

Haastrup's article encompasses a subset of movies that don't converge with my corpus. However, in her terms, the projectionist-protagonists in the films I examine activate both explicit and implicit intertextuality. While it need hardly be stated that they instigate explicit intertextuality when shown running movies, and that their projections are clearly narratively motivated, they are also depicted in ways, in images and in profilmic spaces that allude to other texts. When they function in the latter way, they facilitate what Haastrup calls 'text recognition' or the 'recognition of a reference to a text', which is how implicit intertextuality manifests.[61] I don't mean to imply that the projectionist character in himself operates as a set of quotation marks that lifts allusions from what would otherwise appear as mimetic reproductions of space. Rather, the films create allusions of which he is an occasional constitutive element.

Haastrup cites, as a pertinent forerunner of her work, Noël Carroll's article, 'The Future of Allusion: Hollywood in the Seventies (and Beyond)'.[62] Originally published in 1982, it interrogates the tendency of contemporary Hollywood movies to allude to film history. When films manifest the practices listed below, they form part of a strategy to appeal to distinct kinds of patron or viewer.

> *Allusion*, as I am using it, is an umbrella term covering a mixed lot of practices including quotations, the memorialization of past genres, the reworking of past genres, *homages*, and the recreation of "classic" scenes, shots, plot motifs, lines of dialogue, themes, gestures, and so forth from film history, especially as that history was crystallized and codified in the sixties and early seventies.[63]

[61] Ibid., p. 89.
[62] The article is published in a collection of Carroll's writings in: Noël Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 240-64.
[63] Ibid., p. 241.

Carroll's analysis of the function of film-historical allusion and its address or appeal to the viewer is congruent with the present study's examination of how films about cinemagoing portray the interplay between film and spectator and in how they make alternative readings available while allowing the surface film to operate intact.

Carroll describes the experience of viewing certain Hollywood movies containing allusions thus.

> At many late-seventies premieres, one frequently had the feeling of watching two films simultaneously. There was the genre film pure and simple, and there was also the art film in the genre film, which through its systems of allusions sent an esoteric meaning to film-literate exegetes.[64]

Such films develop 'a two-tiered system of communication which sends an action/drama/fantasy-packed message to one segment of the audience and an additional hermetic, camouflaged, and recondite one to another'.[65] Indeed, Carroll implies that filmmakers secrete a film within a film with both the hidden and superficial movies aiming to satisfy their respective audience contingents. Although Carroll is persuaded that a proportion of patrons partake in 'ambitious … film going'[66] and is receptive to the 'game of allusion'[67] (indeed, he stresses the extent to which the filmmakers, in turn, 'require' such audience members), he detects a backlash in the form of 'excursions in deathly sincerity' like *Kramer vs. Kramer* (Robert Benton, 1979), which are designed to appeal to a third group 'disenfranchised' by the confusing effect of films that appear to be intelligent and 'just plain dumb' at the same time.[68]

---

[64] Ibid., p. 244.
[65] Ibid., pp. 244-5.
[66] Ibid., p. 245.
[67] Ibid., p. 243.
[68] Ibid., p. 245.

The article also argues that film-historical allusions facilitate directorial self-expression.

> By referring to a film by Howard Hawks, contemporary filmmakers assert their possession of a Hawksian world view, a cluster of themes and expressive qualities that has been (ever so thoroughly and repetitiously) expounded in the critical literature; by such an allusion, the new filmmakers unequivocably identify their point of view on the material at hand and thereby comment, with the force of an iconographic symbol, on the ongoing action of the new film.[69]

The directors of whom he speaks are generally film-school graduates. In characterising the new movies as quasi film-critical exercises, he suggests that the filmmakers' 'expressive commitments' are moulded by their engagement with previous generations of auteurs via the film school.[70] He ends his article on a somewhat pessimistic note by arguing that

> artists of the new Hollywood … appear to be taking their marching orders from established criticism. This … is a reversal of the conventional order of things in which the artist is envisioned as creating works that impel the critics and theoreticians to alter their conceptual frameworks. Now we have works designed for a particular kind of criticism.[71]

The article provides a case study of how allusion to film history works as a strategy in relation to a set of films produced in a specific era and by an industry. But just as Carroll observes that Hollywood allusionism originated with the French New Wave, and that, like Hollywood itself, New German Cinema borrowed the tendency from the French,[72] so I argue that most of my corpus films, which aren't generally Hollywood movies, deploy film-historical allusion in

[69] Ibid., p. 242.
[70] Ibid., p. 243.
[71] Ibid., p. 263.
[72] Ibid., pp. 253-4.

a similarly strategic way. For example, *Cinema Paradiso* recreates certain elements of its Italian forerunners, as I show.

A compelling and relevant facet of the article is that Carroll conceives of the filmmaker as a viewer and critic first and foremost, who practices one of the most productive forms of reading imaginable. He also puts the interplay between film and spectator at the centre of his observations about how allusions to film history function.

Mikhail Iampolski's *The Memory of Tiresias: Intertextuality and Film* is a rare full-length study of filmic intertextuality.[73] He conceptualises films as matrices of the cultural artefacts which precede them but may also follow them chronologically. His excursions through the intertextual labyrinths underpinning a range of films make this conceptualisation impressively and instructively vivid. However, the crux of his endeavour is to demonstrate how intertextuality operates as a 'theory of reading'.[74] How does the text make its intertexts visible and thereby open up potential new levels of meaning? As such this work is of interest to the present study of how cinema conceptualises film reception and how one might read a film. At the end of his chapter on DW Griffith, Iampolski says that, 'Intertextual reading … can be projected onto the history of cinema and seen as one of its generative mechanisms'.[75] Intertextual reading therefore generates meaning and one perceives 'through the act of reading … those moments where mimesis, the desire for imitation or likeness, breaks down, giving way to semiosis'.[76]

---

[73] Mikhail Iampolski, *The Memory of Tiresias: Intertextuality and Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
[74] Ibid., p. 253.
[75] Ibid., p. 121.
[76] Ibid., p. 253.

Such anomalous moments are also generative in relation to a central concern of Iampolski's book: the nature of the quotation, which is the key that unlocks intertextuality as a theory of reading. He pithily characterises it as '*a fragment of the text that violates its linear development and derives the motivation that integrates it into the text from outside the text itself*'.[77] If the viewer, or reader, can't integrate into the narrative an anomaly that seems to be some kind of break in it, she might choose to see it as a quotation and seek the intertext that will effect the repair.

Although mimesis and semiosis seem to have been placed in an oppositional relationship, Iampolski's point is a finer one. The process of a film's generating and conveying meaning mimetically is invisible to the viewer. However, when this smooth surface is shattered by semiosis, in the form of the anomaly, the quotation, we 'witness the birth of meaning'.[78] In other words, we are invited to recognise the knot in the mimetic fabric as productive of meaning even if we can't immediately comprehend it. Such anomalies present themselves as junctures of generative potential in which it is implied that the film expresses meaning beyond the story.

What does, and doesn't, constitute a quotation is a stimulating issue. In general, it seems that Iampolski wants to distinguish or separate the strategies films use to signal their own intertexts from their inherent intertextuality. Thus his work is useful insofar as it considers the ways in which, and the degree to which, elements we read as significant are foregrounded, bracketed or marked as such by films themselves and it questions the implications of invisible quotations. Perhaps images or elements we might otherwise want to

[77] Ibid., p. 31. The italics are his.
[78] Ibid.

comprehend and proffer as deliberate devices are, rather, a re-emergence of the cultural matrix to which the film is bound by its inherent intertextuality.

Anticipated contribution to current research

My focus on theatrical exhibition is a departure from much of the previous research undertaken on reflexivity and intertextuality. Rather than look at how assorted film-production processes are represented in cinema, as many do, I devote the entirety of the study to a specific sector of the industry. I therefore offer an in-depth analysis of how the production-distribution-exhibition chain is represented cinematically from its other side through the projectionist and audience. My study also introduces or incorporates films that are often relegated to brief mentions in, or which are even excluded altogether from, literature on reflexivity and intertextuality. Not only does this aim to shed new light on texts previously deployed primarily in debates about national cinema, it also extends reflexivity with iterations of it which are firmly and explicitly rooted socially, politically and historically.

In other words, the reflexivity of the films I examine isn't limited to issues of form. Rather, individually, and as a collective, the films reflect upon cinema's changing social uses through time and space. In addition, I make the analysis of films in the film a central part of my methodology to excavate the world of the audience. The sustained attention I pay to the diegetic film and its forms and functions over the whole of the thesis aims to furnish a more extensive account than previously of how this device works and what its significance might be. Perhaps most obviously, the study offers the projectionist, the film screening situation and the audience as a novel set of figures that are, until now, neglected or overlooked by scholars interested in reflexivity in favour of

directors, writers, film stars and others in attendance when a film is in the process of production. My study writes the projectionist and audience into reflection upon how a film is constructed.

Chapter one
The projectionist and the slapstick screen: *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*, *Sherlock Jr.* and *The Projectionist*

This chapter analyses the American comedies *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (Edwin S Porter, 1902), *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, 1924) and *The Projectionist* (Harry Hurwitz, 1971), which are all about a projectionist or the audience's encounter with one. Though they span a significant portion of the twentieth century, and represent disparate eras in history and filmmaking, slapstick is prominent in all of them and an important linking thread. *The Projectionist* can't be categorised as a slapstick comedy, yet there are many passages of slapstick within it. It is also made clear that its projectionist-protagonist, Chuck (Chuck McCann), is a fan of the genre and emulates the silent clowns. Representations of the projectionist in American cinema originated in slapstick, as is discussed here. Indeed, next to Toto and Alfredo in *Cinema Paradiso* (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*) (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988), *Sherlock Jr.*, a slapstick film, offers perhaps the best known projectionist figure in cinema. *Cinema Paradiso* itself acknowledges Keaton's projectionist by making his image present in the booth.

As far as early cinema is concerned, the projectionist appears in several films. The first known examples are comedies. Robert W Paul's *The Countryman and the Cinematograph* is a British one from 1901 and *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* is its American remake. Whereas the latter has survived in its entirety, Paul's film only remains in fragments, none of which depict the projectionist. A third example, *Patouillard opérateur de ciné* (Paul

Bertho, 1910), a French comedy, is lost. It was exported both to Britain and the US as *Bill as an Operator*, and is one of a series in which the Bill character assumes different roles or is placed in different situations. *Bill as an Operator* is the first film, to my knowledge, in which the projectionist doesn't forfeit main-protagonist status to a 'rube' or audience member. According to its synopsis, Bill, who is distracted by kissing a 'lady vendor of chocolates', cranks the handle of the machine too slowly, too quickly, backwards and so on.[1] The effects of this upon the on-screen figures are the source of the comedy.

Hilde D'haeyere's article on the Keystone Company's 'metamovies' recounts that Keystone's head, Mack Sennett, revisited the process of making a film, as a subject, repeatedly in the 1910s.[2] In terms of projection and the projectionist, the 1910s likewise saw several manifestations. *The Revenge of a Kinematograph Cameraman* (*Mest kinematograficheskogo operatora*) (Wladyslaw Starewicz, 1912) is a Russian-made animation comedy short in which spouses visit the cinema. The projectionist, who is also the eponymous vengeful kinematograph cameraman, screens footage he has taken which proves the husband is having an affair. At the end of the film, the husband jumps through the screen to escape the beating his wife has started to inflict upon him with an umbrella. He then ascends the booth to fight the projectionist, which results in its bursting into flames.[3] In the US, the projectionist is briefly seen in the Keystone comedies *Mabel's Dramatic Career* (Mack Sennett, 1913)

[1] The description of *Bill as an Operator* in *The Bioscope* paints a picture of what we might have seen. It says, for example, that '(A word of praise should be given here to the excellent manner in which the pictures appear, giving first a view of Bill in the box, and then the audience watching the screen.)' See: Anon., 'Lux: *Bill as an Operator*', *The Bioscope* (10 November 1910), p. 33.
[2] Hilde D'haeyere, 'Slapstick on Slapstick: Mack Sennett's Metamovies Revisit the Keystone Film Company', *Film History*, 26:2 (2014), pp. 82-111.
[3] Animated insects 'star' in the film. A grasshopper is the vengeful cameraman-projectionist, while a beetle and a dragonfly are the married couple.

and *A Movie Star* (Fred Hibbard, 1916). In both cases, antics in the auditorium give cause for cutting between the audience and the projectionist in the booth. In *Luke's Movie Muddle* (Hal Roach, 1916) the projectionist has a more substantial role. Together with Luke, Harold Lloyd's cinema manager, he creates mayhem during the screening in the manner of *Bill as an Operator*.

A much later example of a projectionist in a slapstick comedy is that of Louie (Shemp Howard) in *Hellzapoppin'* (HC Potter, 1941). In this film there are several instances of interaction between the on-screen protagonists, from inside the film in the film, and Louie, who is based in the projection booth in the real world. On one occasion Louie rewinds the film (which turns back time in the diegesis of the movie). On another, when the projector is disturbed by a fight in the booth between Louie and an usherette, it causes tremors in the world of the film.

In preference to comedies of the 1910s or *Hellzapoppin'*, the films I have selected for in-depth treatment here place emphasis on the screen and on the invitation it seems to issue to the spectator to pass through. *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* is about this in its entirety. It is traditionally understood as warning us that we are separate from the screen and are required only to watch from a distance. However, all three films analysed here have spectators projecting themselves into the screen in various ways. I hope therefore to demonstrate that *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* sets a template for slapstick comedy involving the screen, which is revisited by later films. My analysis of *Sherlock Jr.* argues that the boy's oneiric passage is deliberately dilated so as to associate the screen with spectacle as opposed to an immersive storyline. Though *The Projectionist*'s 'screen passages' are psychological, they are numerous. Moreover, there are points at which Chuck,

or his alter ego, are shown as having passed through in a literal sense. Although the case studies are historically dispersed, I hope to demonstrate that their coherence lies partly in their depicting spectators' relationships to the screen.

As we have seen, among the earliest filmmakers were those who evidently recognised the comedic potential of the film exhibition scenario and of the projectionist long before he was ever portrayed, alternatively, as a tragic or melodramatic figure.[4] This is no doubt in large part because he first appears in the cinema-of-attractions era in which comedy was prevalent as far as the creation of fictive situations was concerned.[5] This chapter's case studies aim to explore how cinematic projection functions in the cinema of attractions, slapstick and in a comedy which both deploys slapstick and experiments with form. Slapstick is a genre which privileges performance, gags and stunts. Its attenuated narrative is typically there to link set pieces and doesn't require elaborate plotting. As such it has a problematic relationship to the classical Hollywood narrative system.[6] The presence of films in the film, and the spectator's interactions with them, also help to relegate the story to a secondary element. Robert Eberwein suggests that the film in the film is primarily a comic device, even if not always deployed in a comic genre.[7] Later chapters in the present study, too, will reveal that the film in the film can be used to comic effect in solemn and melancholic films like *Kings of the Road* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*) (Wim

[4] N. 1 of the introduction explains my use of the male pronoun with regards to the projectionist in cinema.
[5] Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde', in Wanda Strauven (ed.), *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), pp. 381-8.
[6] The relationship between slapstick and the Hollywood narrative system is explored in Donald Crafton, 'Pie and Chase: Gag, Spectacle and Narrative in Slapstick Comedy', in Kristine Brunovska Karnick and Henry Jenkins (eds) *Classical Hollywood Comedy* (New York; London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 106-19.
[7] Robert Eberwein, 'Comedy and the Film within a Film', *Wide Angle* 3 (1979), p. 13.

Wenders, 1976) in which one projectionist discovers another masturbating in the booth. In this chapter I want to elaborate upon Eberwein's observation that, 'In its development stage, filmmakers saw the comic potential of the film within a film – the ironies, humorous juxtapositions, amusing disparities which could arise'.[8]

The present chapter argues that it is significant that the projectionist and projection became a cinematic subject in film's earliest days. It is concerned with how the cinema of attractions, which is widely defined by its self-consciousness, and in which comic and trick films are privileged, is reflexive. In addition, it purposes to show the ways in which a film like *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* establishes certain tropes which recur in later films like *Sherlock Jr.* and *The Projectionist*. As far as *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* and *Sherlock Jr.* are concerned, the major part of their discussion will be devoted to the reflexivity of attractions in the form of gags, tricks, stunts and moments of spectacle. I conduct my investigation with reference to the well known work of Tom Gunning[9] and Donald Crafton[10] on the relations between attractions and narrative in films before 1906, and in slapstick comedies of the 1920s, respectively. I will examine what new light *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* and *Sherlock Jr.* might shed on such relations: on the extent to which a story, or stories, are being told and the part spectacle plays. It is my hope that the present chapter's unique focus on projection and the projectionist might provide the most rigorous and persuasive analysis yet of what *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* and *Sherlock Jr.*, which have been much written

[8] Ibid., p. 17.
[9] Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions', pp. 381-8 and Tom Gunning, '"Now You See It, Now You Don't": The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions', *The Velvet Light Trap* 32 (September 1993), pp. 3-12.
[10] See n. 6 of this chapter.

about, reveal about the representation of cinema spectatorship and, in turn, how the films conceive of, and relate to, their own audiences.

The dialectic between attractions and narrative isn't relevant to *The Projectionist*. However, I argue that the film, through its experimental form and self-consciousness, offers a powerful critique of the way Hollywood tells stories through long established and accepted filmmaking techniques and its narrative system. In this respect, it challenges Hollywood narrative as slapstick does. In particular, I contend that *The Projectionist* is concerned to link how a story is told with the contents of that story and the political ends of Hollywood filmmaking. Finally, the chapter will suggest how the American projectionist-protagonist of slapstick extends our understanding of how reflexivity in film functions.

Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show: the audience as attraction

In *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*, the Josh character is a so-called 'rube' or country bumpkin; a stock character in vaudeville, comic strips and other popular media whose stories often involve him in a bruising encounter with modernity, such as with an escalator or department store. At the moving picture show, he believes what he sees before him is real and repeatedly approaches the screen in order to interact with its projected figures. When he tries to stop a screen couple from kissing, he suddenly encounters the material barrier he has been overlooking and, concealed behind it, a projectionist enraged by his interruption.

From this description of *Uncle Josh* it is clear that the relationship between the film and the spectator, which is one of the principal subjects of the present study, is a major element of the narrative. Produced in 1902, the film belongs to a period of early cinema characterised as the 'cinema of attractions' by Gunning.[11] In Gunning's conceptualisation, the cinema of attractions, with its way of addressing the audience directly and showing and presenting them with sights rather than relating a story, establishes a 'different relation to the spectator' than that of films after 1906 or thereabouts. The predominance of direct address precludes the audience's adopting a voyeuristic position in relation to the pre-1906 film, which is what distinguishes early cinema from that of narrative integration.[12] The present analysis of *Uncle Josh* aims to complicate Gunning's idea that the audience's voyeurism was impossible in the cinema of attractions. I am far from the first to interrogate his formulation of attractions. Indeed, Gunning himself is careful to state that early cinema needn't entirely preclude narrative.[13] Similarly, Paul Young sees *Uncle Josh* as a 'a transitional film, an attempt to mediate the historical tension between attractions and story films'.[14]

The present analysis of *Uncle Josh* departs from previous work by teasing out the brief that cinema seems to hold in the era as part of its examination of the spectator's behaviour. This involves a lengthier exploration

---

[11] Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions', pp. 381-8.
[12] According to Gunning, 'Now You See It', p. 5:

> Attractions pose a very different relation to the spectator. The attraction does not hide behind the pretense of an unacknowledged spectator [in this respect it recalls Thelma Ritter's line as Stella in Hitchcock's *Rear Window* – "I'm not shy, I've been looked at before"]. As I have stated elsewhere, the attraction invokes an exhibitionist rather than a voyeuristic regime. The attraction directly addresses the spectator, acknowledging the viewer's presence and seeking to quickly satisfy a curiosity.

[13] Ibid., p. 4.
[14] Paul Young, *The Cinema Dreams Its Rivals: Media Fantasy Films from Radio to the Internet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. 28.

of the eponymous picture show than is carried out elsewhere. However, it also revisits the question as to why the audience, in the form of the individuated instance of the Josh character, is made visible to such a high degree. Miriam Hansen argues that he functions as a 'negative example' for audiences of early film still learning a 'mode of reception appropriate to the cinema'.[15] Although Hansen's interpretation of the main character recognises his high visibility and importance, my misgiving about this argument is that it overlooks a tendency of contemporary films to recognise the comic potential of the diegetic audience as an attraction in its own right. Examples of such films include the Edison company's own in *Rubes in the Theatre* (Edwin S Porter), a remake of Lubin's *Two Rubes at the Theatre* (S Lubin), *Trapeze Disrobing Act* (George S Fleming; Edwin S Porter, all 1901), *The Extra Turn* (Edwin S Porter) and *Two Chappies in a Box* (both 1903). They all prominently feature lively, participatory variety-theatre audiences who are crucial to the comedies in which they are represented. The Josh character is similarly the main attraction and his performativity is amplified by the theatrical setting of the picture show. A precedent for this is set in *Rubes in the Theatre*:

> The film was photographed as though the camera were on a vaudeville stage taking pictures of the audience. Immediately in front of the camera and in the center of a group of seated spectators are two men made up to resemble country bumpkins. Throughout the film, the only action visible is the antics of the rubes and the other spectators close to them who are laughing at them…[16]

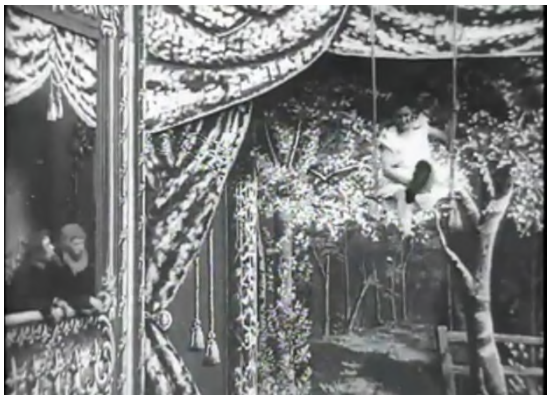
The Lubin film upon which this Edison remake was based, *Two Rubes at the Theatre*, presents approximately what is described above with the addition of an

[15] Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 28.
[16] Kemp R Niver and Bebe Bergsten, *Motion Pictures from the Library of Congress Paper Print Collection 1894-1912* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 84.

usher who tells the rubes to remove their hats. Jokes originate in the rubes' clothes, uproarious gestures and laughter and delighted, childlike engagement with on-stage events as they point at the camera (which inhabits the position of the stage they are watching) and subside repeatedly into giggles (fig. 1.1). Apart from that, their consumption of nuts and apples, use of opera glasses and the amusement of the spectators around them provide other sources of humour. *Trapeze Disrobing Act*, *Two Chappies in a Box* and *The Extra Turn* are all Edison films which make use of the same variety-theatre-stage set as that of *Uncle Josh* (figs. 1.2a and 1.2b). The two rubes who form the audience of *Trapeze Disrobing Act* have long beards and eat apples in a similar manner to those in Lubin's *Two Rubes at the Theatre* but they inhabit the box where Josh first appears and 'begin going through antics, which to say the least, are highly amusing. When the stockings come off, the climax takes place. The Rubes jump from their seats and make things lively for a short time in the theatre'.[17] The Edison catalogue quoted here – perhaps disingenuously – places emphasis on the rubes' actions rather than on the disrobing. In *Two Chappies in a Box* the spectators are ejected from said box for spilling the contents of a bottle of wine on the curtains (observed by Charles Musser as symbolic of phallic and incontinent excitement) and creating a disturbance while trying to attract the attention of a female performer.[18] In *The Extra Turn* the three occupants of the box demonstrate their approval of the first act, but are really there to make clear their feelings about the extra turn by lobbing missiles at him in the form of hats and cushions.

[17] Library of Congress, '*Trapeze Disrobing Act*', *Library of Congress*, (n. d.) <https://www.loc.gov/item/96514756/>, accessed 18 April 2018.
[18] Charles Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company* (Berkeley; Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p. 251.

Figure 1.1. *Two Rubes at the Theatre* makes a spectacle of rubes in the audience



Figures 1.2a and 1.2b. *Trapeze Disrobing Act* (1.2a) is one of the films shot using the same variety-theatre set as *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1.2b)

When regarded in the context of films that relish the comically rambunctious interactions between audience and performer – or theatre management – the notion of *Uncle Josh* as educative on cinema spectatorship seems overstated and less persuasive. Such a didactic mission also presupposes a kind of hypocrisy at *Uncle Josh*'s heart, overlooking how the film exposes the contradictions and complexities inherent to the cinema of attractions' mode of audience address. After all, the whole gag is predicated on the idea that such a mode of address – as well as the projected image itself – produces befuddling effects and illusions, regardless of the viewer's intellectual

capacities. My contention is, therefore, that *Uncle Josh*'s problem isn't exclusively the issue of spectatorship or reception but attractions themselves. As part of this, I argue that the film is self-aware regarding the nature of attractions, and critiques their de facto inscription of viewers as primarily sensation-seeking. I thus highlight the ways in which *Uncle Josh*'s comedy is indeed predicated on the audience's voyeurism and so addresses itself pointedly to a sophisticated viewer.

The function of the picture show and 'cinematic voyeurism'

Before the protagonist makes himself conspicuous in *Uncle Josh* by breaching the confines of his theatre box, the screen is illuminated by a title card crediting 'The Edison Projecting Kinetoscope' (fig. 1.2b). *Uncle Josh*'s producer, Edwin S Porter, includes title cards while it appears – from the fragment that survives – that its British forerunner, *The Countryman and the Cinematograph*, doesn't. Title cards in *Uncle Josh* are therefore a deliberate enhancement. They clarify the structure of the picture show as a series of machine-manufactured diegeses. As such, they lend *Uncle Josh* a linearity, by signalling that the views presented on screen are discrete and discontinuous by design. They obliquely gesture towards the unifying artistic consciousness of whoever edits them into a particular order while being careful to signal them as separate items. Yet titles, like much in *Uncle Josh*, also indicate the dichotomy between narrative and spectacle. On one hand, they aid the picture show's legibility as a diegetic or on-screen world from which we, the audience and Josh, are excluded. On the other, they address us in that they are visual 'fanfares' or presentational flourishes like the seeming curtsies with which the dancer addresses the audience as she begins her performance.

The titles give the lie to *Uncle Josh*'s appearing to be a single-shot film. In this connection, they relate to an evolution in the use of camera trickery. In the two *Uncle Josh* films made by Porter before the present case study – *Uncle Josh's Nightmare* and *Uncle Josh in a Spooky Hotel* (both 1900) – we are entertained by the protagonist's being tormented by elusive devils and ghosts who escape capture by means of substitution splicing. In other words, the appearance and disappearance of figures – through blatant substitution splicing – is the highly visible source of Josh's antagonism. *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* employs the technique somewhat differently. Substitution splicing allows intradiegetic films to succeed each other smoothly at first. When Josh tears the screen down, it makes the screen materialise and stages the dramatic revelation of the projectionist. In other words, it is used to create and maintain, for some duration, the reality of the diegetic picture show. It is equally used to destroy it. Yet overall, it doesn't draw attention to itself as a technique, as in the other *Uncle Josh* films, through its presentation of the laws of nature being defied. Rather, it reveals what is, notionally, always behind the screen. Therefore, in the present and latest *Uncle Josh* film (*Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*), substitution splicing's functions involve its disguise, as a technique, for the greater part of the film, rather than its naked display. In short, titles 'describe' or delineate the screen, and the cinematic machinery as a whole, as an internal contiguous diegesis that eventually disintegrates with the removal of the screen.

This more sophisticated and subtle deployment of camera trickery in a film staging a picture show reflects the fact that exhibitors were among the first to carry out film-editing related functions, as Musser has shown.[19] Exhibitors

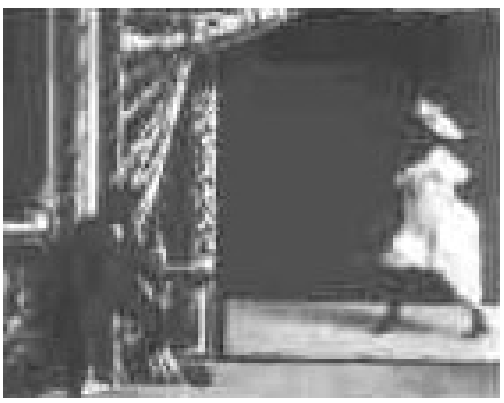
[19] Ibid., pp. 103-56.

produced picture shows by assembling lengths of film and incorporating elements such as magic lantern slides, a lecture, narrator or music. The initial title card enunciates this conflation of cinematic projection and film production by seeming to credit the projecting kinetoscope with the authorship of the show. Since Josh's foolish behaviour and misinterpretations are also integral to the show, we might even think of him in connection with the occasional narrator used during the exhibition of early film whose function was to ensure it 'went over'. When regarded in isolation, the individual cinematic attractions portrayed in *Uncle Josh* do indeed conform to Gunning's broad characterisation of them in his various writings. However, *Uncle Josh* itself, assisted by title cards, represents the ways in which a picture show might be narrativised through editing. Title cards and Josh as intradiegetic 'narrator' are two devices that point towards the attempt to integrate spectacle into an overarching structure, if not a narrative.

Josh's naivety as a spectator is a highly entertaining facet of *Uncle Josh*. However, this characteristic is, in some respects, mirrored in the inclusion of 'Parisian Dancer' in the picture show. 'Parisian Dancer', which doesn't appear to have survived, or to have been documented, as a film independent of *Uncle Josh*,[20] recalls a period in the Edison company's film production in which demand was partly met by recording variety acts at the 'Black Maria' studio, an activity which was at its peak between 1894 and 1897. This phase was in the recent past when *Uncle Josh* was copyrighted in January 1902. By then, the

[20] No film entitled *Parisian Dancer* is listed in Niver's and Bergsten's account of the Library of Congress' paper print collection or in Charles Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures, 1890-1900: An Annotated Filmography* (Gemona (UD) Italy: Giornate del cinema muto, 1997). Nor have I been able to find any description of a film that might match 'Parisian Dancer' in Niver and Bergsten, Musser or via the Library of Congress' online catalogue. The provenance of the film can therefore only be a matter of speculation, though its look very much suggests its having been filmed at Edison's Black Maria studio.

studio that replaced the Black Maria had already been functional for a year or two.[21] The sparse black background against which the dancer performs the cancan provides a typical example of the aesthetic created by the original Black Maria studio (figs. 1.3a and 1.3b). Since the Black Maria was the original crucible for an experimentation with film that would facilitate the commercial exploitation of the (non-projecting) kinetoscope, its appearance within *Uncle Josh* recollects past practice, despite the fact that the history of the filmic medium was extremely short at the turn of the century. Although Josh's foolishly dancing along is undoubtedly the principal butt of the joke, it is interesting that a film visually connected to Edison's early days of production is the one charged with leading the protagonist into error. In Josh's embodying what might have been imagined as the behaviour of the first audiences ever to encounter moving pictures, he might be said to find his counterpart, in filmic terms, in a product of the first phase of Edison film production like 'Parisian Dancer'.



Figures 1.3a and 1.3b. *Amy Muller* (William Heise, 1896) (1.3a) illustrates the aesthetic of films shot in the Black Maria studio, as does 'Parisian Dancer' in *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1.3b)

[21] Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon*, p. 159.

With its mention of Paris, the title card of 'Parisian Dancer' exceeds its overt function to introduce the film by encouraging our recognition of the cancan, a dance which, wherever performed or displayed, solicits arousal but not the sort of participation entered into by Josh. As far as this is concerned, his attempted interaction with the dancer is more interesting than discussion of *Uncle Josh* generally allows, as he clearly interprets the dance as a species of jig. Aside from the obstacle of his want of a skirt to veil whatever he might have to reveal beneath, he doesn't cancan so much as spring about, swinging his arms as well as his legs (fig. 1.3b). 'Parisian Dancer' exacerbates Josh's ignorance via misleading visual cues as well as its direct address. Its framing reproduces the dancer on screen as a life-size figure. Her frontal orientation encourages Josh's belief in her issue of an invitation which he answers in the affirmative. Josh's interaction with 'Parisian Dancer' exposes the contradictory effects created by films characteristic of the attractions era. On the one hand, the dancer's frontal orientation is a form of audience address. On the other, her performativity defers active solicitation of the audience and functions to modulate the manner in which her dance is received. In other words, Josh's confusion excavates the contradictory ways in which attractions function.

Within the diegesis, Josh's 'partnering' the dancer dissolves the spectatorial relationship between viewer and object that exists between himself and the figuration. This entails his making a spectacle of himself to rival that of the dance. His comedic misinterpretation somewhat dilutes the dancer's display of sexuality. His dancing doesn't, therefore, limit the joke to one about his failure to recognise a figure traced in light. He also overlooks what the title card initially helps to establish about the dance's purposes: its provocation of scopophilia. Rather than Josh's refusal to objectify the dancer being a feminist

gesture, it is the result of his desire to attract her attention and, perhaps, to penetrate her personal sphere. Secondly, the effect of his actions is to commandeer some of the attention that might normally be the preserve of the film alone. This undercutting of 'Parisian Dancer' also repackages the cancan as faintly ridiculous; or, at least, as not to be taken wholly seriously.

In discussing another film in which women's legs are exposed, *What Demoralized the Barbershop* (1901), Musser points out that the film grants the spectator the same titillating view as the men in the shop. It 'suggests the superiority of cinematic voyeurism; film spectators can look from the unhumiliating comfort of their seats'.[22] Similarly, we can enjoy Josh's humiliation from the comfort of ours, and one of our pleasures is our appreciation of 'Parisian Dancer' on levels from which the protagonist is disbarred by his naivety.

'Parisian Dancer' thus produces, for our entertainment, two dancers including Josh. Their equivalence in our eyes functions in several ways. Firstly, it underscores Josh's lack of knowledge and our superiority to him in terms of our competence as an audience. It thereby highlights what Musser calls our 'cinematic voyeurism'. Yet the film in the film includes cues that anticipate and encourage Josh's mistake. His juxtaposition with the dancer allows us to perceive this and to perceive that the relationship between intradiegetic viewer and film is characterised by naivety on both sides.

Similarly, Josh's response to 'The Black Diamond Express', in fleeing to the theatre box as the train's underside and wheels fill the screen, depicts the trope of the 'panicking audience' as described by Stephen Bottomore.[23] The

[22] Ibid., p. 114.
[23] Stephen Bottomore, 'The Panicking Audience?: Early Cinema and the 'Train Effect', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 19:2 (1999), pp. 177-216.

presentation of 'The Black Diamond Express' within *Uncle Josh* changes the train film's primary function when screened in reality. Rather than its granting a view of the recently opened passenger service running through Eastern Pennsylvania, it becomes an overt comment on the audience address of the cinema of attractions as exemplified by train films. Bottomore concludes that such panic was quickly acknowledged as apocryphal. The film's deliberate inclusion of the 'train effect', and its ridiculing the old chestnut of audience overreaction, also supports the notion of *Uncle Josh*'s looking back, in a mildly parodic way, at the filming of variety acts in the Black Maria. Hansen agrees that *Uncle Josh* glances backwards when she says of it that, 'Stylistically…the film is more complex than any one of the films projected within its mise-en-scène, what is more, by quoting these films, it marks them as earlier and more "primitive"'.[24]

The joke at Josh's expense made by 'The Black Diamond Express' is somewhat hypocritical in that it overlooks that such a response is anticipated, one might almost say desired, by the train film and even encouraged by exhibitors. According to Albert E Smith's account of John Stuart Blackton's presentations of *Black Diamond Express*, Blackton would whip up the audience's excitement in advance of the film by showing a still image of the train and then telling them that it would '"rush toward you"'.[25] This makes it clear that in the real world such a film not only showcased the train but also inscribed within it the dramatic idea and shocking effect of the onrushing locomotive. Our laughter at Josh's response obfuscates what one might otherwise feel is the somewhat ignoble intended effect of attractions: that they

[24] Hansen, p. 28.
[25] Albert E Smith with Phil A Koury, *Two Reels and a Crank* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), p. 39; quoted in Gunning, 'Now You See It', p. 7.

are shallow thrills or amusements, promising nothing further than to provoke sensation and response. Both 'Parisian Dancer' and 'The Black Diamond Express' mandate Josh's behaviour, regardless of his ignorance. Insofar as the seemingly logical inherent address of the cinema of attractions is to the rube, our laughter at Josh also licenses the 'cinematic voyeurism' described above: our nuanced enjoyment of attractions on different levels as we both indulge our inner rube while also adopting a superior, voyeuristic position. Josh's responses, which exaggerate the implications of direct address, highlight the fundamental orientation of the cinema of attractions towards audience arousal.

The question of voyeurism most obviously comes to the fore with 'The Country Couple'. The comedic escalation triggered by this final diegetic film is indicated by its timely multiplication of rubes. The male half of the couple, after offering to fill his sweetheart's pail at the well, is dealt successive blows to the head from the pumping arm and knocked to the ground twice. This accident presents Josh with another entrée. He is convulsed in a similar fashion to the sweetheart who doubles over in laughter at her friend's pratfalls (fig. 1.4). Josh's finding the rube hilarious, therefore, no more positions him as a spectator, as far as he is aware, as it does the female bumpkin. Rather, he feels himself fully involved in the joke.

The woman's consolation of her stricken mate quickly turns amorous as they use the opportunity to indulge in a protracted embrace. At this point, *Uncle Josh* becomes an ingenious example of a subgenre of early film in which figures in compromising or titillating situations are interrupted. An apt comparison is *Interrupted Lovers* (1896), which 'made a hit' showing an amorous pair

chastised by a 'wrathful father'.[26] Another is *The Gay Shoe Clerk* (Edwin S Porter, 1903) in which a woman being fitted for shoes exposes her lower leg and petticoat hem to the clerk, who responds by kissing her. Their canoodling is interrupted by her chaperone who swats the clerk away by beating him with her umbrella.[27]

Figure 1.4. Josh shares the on-screen rubes' joke in *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*

'The Country Couple' doesn't seem to have survived as an independent film outside of *Uncle Josh*. Nothing matching its description has been copyrighted. It might therefore be felt bizarre to speculate how it might have ended had it not been prematurely curtailed. If it was made especially for *Uncle Josh* it is to be assumed that no ending has ever existed. Despite this, the

[26] In the Maguire & Baucus catalogue summary provided by the Library of Congress and the American Film Institute the father is 'watchful' (see: See Library of Congress, '*Interrupted Lovers*', *Library of Congress*, (n. d.) <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694126/>, accessed 8 January 2017), and in the catalogue of FZ Maguire & Co (quoted in Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures, 1890-1900*, p. 242) he is 'wrathful'.

[27] Other films based around interruptions include *The Interrupted Bathers* (George S Fleming; Edwin S Porter, 1902), in which men appear from the trees and steal the clothes of girls bathing in a river. In *Seminary Girls* (James H White, 1897), according to Edison's catalogue, a 'number of young ladies, in their night robes, are having a frolic, and are interrupted by a teacher. One girl makes herself very conspicuous by crawling under a bed' (see Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures, 1890-1900*, p. 289). The teacher, on discovering a pillow fight, repeatedly attempts to grab the 'conspicuous' girl by the legs poking out from beneath the bed and from her nightie, which has somewhat ridden up.

'interruption' subgenre yields a likely solution and suggests that the couple were on course to be apprehended within their own diegesis until Josh causes an interruption across the screen boundary. Instead of surprising the country couple from behind, as happens in *Interrupted Lovers* (fig. 1.5), Josh attacks them from the front and not only brings their canoodling to an end but the moving picture show as a whole. In reacting immediately to provocation, Josh explicitly denies himself a voyeuristic position – to the extent of substituting himself for the surveilling figure rather than waiting for the story of 'The Country Couple' to resolve itself. Josh's interruption denies us any possibility of partaking in the pleasure of witnessing the passionate rubes caught in the act. Instead, we are confronted with an even more spectacular jolt: the dismantling of the picture show. This turn of events highlights the safety of our own spectatorial position as the uneventful and unabated continuation of our own screening yields the unexpected view of the concealed machinery in the diegetic theatre.

Figure 1.5. In *Interrupted Lovers* the rural couple is interrupted from behind

Once again, the frontal orientation of the protagonists of 'The Country Couple', particularly when they embrace, is striking inasmuch as the pair do indeed appear to address their amorous display at a third party, looking at the camera for a sustained period and hardly breaking their gaze at it to turn to each other. Hansen reads Josh's response in Freudian terms saying that:

> As he watches the rube's unmistakable advances toward the woman, Uncle Josh most acutely feels the structural exclusion of the cinematic spectator from the space observed … Now altogether infantilized, he assaults and tears down the screen. Aiming at the paternal rival, he gets embroiled instead with the projectionist behind the screen, the hidden author of the illusion.[28]

I interpret Josh's intervention as according with conventions established in interruption films. In other words, while the screen separates him from the couple in reality, and therefore creates a voyeuristic position for him, I see his interference as resisting this. Hence, I don't agree with Hansen's suggestion that he is motivated to intervene by childish oedipal jealousy. Rather, he sees himself in the watchful father role prescribed by the interruption scenario.[29] Similarly, while the 'structural exclusion' of Josh is inscribed in the material reality of the picture show and its screen, Josh's rube mentality, his staging of an interruption, the couple's addressing their display to the audience and their apparent attempt to implicate Josh in their illicit tryst all seek to deny or overcome this. The 'primal scene par excellence' to which Hansen later refers[30] does come about accidentally, but only at the point of the revelation of the

---

[28] Hansen, p. 26.
[29] The film's description in Edison's catalogue supports the idea of Josh as the father figure, saying ' … Uncle Josh evidently thinks he recognizes his own daughter, and jumping again upon the stage he removes his coat and prepares to chastise the lover …' See Library of Congress, '*Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*', *Library of Congress*, (n. d.) <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694324/>, accessed 8 January 2017.
[30] Hansen, p. 26.

machinery. Its effect is so powerful precisely because Josh only understands himself as infantilised when he is finally confronted by the screen, projectionist and his projector. Yet once again the final punch-up and Josh's fighting back represents his ongoing repudiation of his proper spectatorial status. Accordingly, the fight has *Uncle Josh* ending with an attraction.

The projectionist's revelation is a shock in the brutal way it disabuses Josh by confronting him with the manufactured lie regarding the 'world' laid out before him. The projecting machinery that materialises from behind the screen to an extent resembles, and mirrors, the camera that beholds it. The sight of the projectionist and projector reminds us, too, that the Josh character is necessarily ignorant of the camera as well. Indeed, the moments in which he faces the camera are too brief, and he is too distant, to be felt as addressing *Uncle Josh*'s viewers directly through the film frame. Rather, he addresses us via the circuitous route of occasionally appearing to acknowledge the diegetic variety-theatre audience. Though they remain out of frame, the camera nonetheless positions us among them. This is yet another example of the way *Uncle Josh* points to the complex (rather than simply direct) address of attractions.

Uncle Josh doesn't solely raise questions of spectatorship through its protagonist's ignorance. It equally invites interrogation of attractions themselves. The Josh character's responses highlight, and make problematic, their essential nature as spectacular, aggressive and confrontational, even as the picture-show presentation neatly edits them into something linear and legible. Thus the film reveals the nuanced spectatorial address of the picture show and of the attractions within it. It is also plausible that, in *Uncle Josh*, Porter surveys past and present film fare through a sardonic or playful lens.

Uncle Josh's sophistication (in terms of the technical challenges it negotiates and its construction of an elaborate joke), portends the end of the film-as-novelty era. It displays an ambition that exceeds the production of vacuous amusement, thrills or even belly laughs.

One of the ways in which this is acknowledged is by addressing our sophistication as viewers. The strategy finds expression in Musser's 'cinematic voyeurism', in which we are deliberately made aware of looking at Josh, and at both the diegetic and extra-diegetic (actual) screen, 'from the unhumiliating comfort of [our] seats'. We can 'see but not be seen' and enjoy the attractions on a different level to the intradiegetic spectator.[31] I have aimed to demonstrate that *Uncle Josh* betrays the limitations of attractions and points to the possibility of critical spectatorship. Far from precluding voyeurism, *Uncle Josh*, which is nonetheless in many ways typical of the cinema of attractions, strongly portends the spectator's invisibility.

Cinema and ways of seeing: the viewer and the filmmaker

Since *Uncle Josh*'s projectionist only appears briefly, he is a minor character in comparison with Josh himself. Yet *Uncle Josh* is significant as far as the projectionist is concerned because, apart from the fact that it is his first known surviving filmic representation, the manner of his manifesting is noteworthy. Josh's pulling the screen down, even though an unintentional 'trick', is a gesture reminiscent of the magician, and one that frequently occurs in the cinema of attractions. This sudden 'interruption' is a turn of events for which we are unprepared, putting us on a similar footing, temporarily, to the rube. Even though present-day and contemporary viewers of *Uncle Josh* know how cinema

[31] Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon*, p. 114.

works, until the moment of revelation we don't know that the projectionist will be shown to us or that he has been located behind the screen all along. The projectionist is, therefore, withheld from view for most of this film whereas in most of my corpus (apart from *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* [*Bu san]* [Tsai Ming-liang, 2003], as we will see in chapter three) his depiction in his projectionist's role isn't revelatory or surprising. His 'unveiling' in *Uncle Josh* heightens the sense of the projectionist as the film show's source or maker. This portrayed what was usually the case in reality, according to Musser's research on early exhibition and on the career of Porter: that the producer and exhibitor were 'co-creators' of film shows.[32]

The encounter between Josh and the projectionist also reveals the projectionist as the mediator between the real world (that which the audience inhabits) and the one his show creates. Moreover, it emphasises that even as far as the audience is concerned, we don't all share a reality. Josh's misperception of cinema is an aspect of *Uncle Josh* that deserves attention beyond its attesting to his naivety as a rube or its affirming our own superiority as an audience. *Uncle Josh*, and its British predecessor, were surely among the first films to make a subject of the idea that moving images are open to the viewer's interpretation. In other words, cinema has the potential to make rubes of all of us. This highlights a gap that is more evident in other films in the corpus: that of the breach between the viewer's ways of seeing and how that mindset might interfere with what the filmmaker attempts to achieve. This gap becomes, paradoxically, a clash in *Uncle Josh*, which positions the projectionist as the point where competing visions of the world encounter one another.

Uncle Josh sets a kind of precedent for many of the films in the corpus in

[32] Ibid., pp. 104-57.

that, in different ways it makes both the projectionist and the audience conspicuous. I have attempted to show that in the cinema of attractions audiences are interesting subjects per se. *Uncle Josh* is, therefore, not alone in lampooning audience behaviour. The interpretation of his ridicule should take into consideration what it is well established by Gunning: that pre-1906 cinema delighted in showing, revealing and depicting surveillance, interruption, voyeurism and so on.

Uncle Josh is also one of the first films in which film itself is an object and is made conspicuous. It makes visible the ways in which films attempt to influence their reception, and conjoin the separate worlds of film and audience, often by means of direct address. Attractions promote misperception in order to heighten their effects. In other words, *Uncle Josh* delineates the limits of cinema and its illusions.

The persistence of cinema is of particular pertinence to the later films of this study. Yet in *Uncle Josh*, too, Josh's obliteration of the moving picture show emphasises its contingent nature. The depiction of cinema's destruction at the hands of the audience is a stark iteration of the degree to which the audience's acceptance or tolerance of cinema is crucial. This is a notion that will recur throughout the study.

In showing how *Uncle Josh* complicates Gunning's ideas about the cinema of attractions' relations to its spectator, I attempt to demonstrate that, as visible and important as they are, the rube and his outlandish behaviour aren't the sole bearers of meaning. Scholars tend to overlook the ways in which *Uncle Josh* is representative of the cinema of attractions' general delight in audiences, voyeurs and surveillers in their proposal that Josh's misbehaviour speaks to a wider need for audience training. I argue, in addition, that *Uncle*

Josh constitutes an instance of pre-1906 film reflecting upon the nature of film at that time rather than merely making the rube and his behaviour the issue. In this connection it emerges that reflexivity encompasses how films cue – or try to anticipate and influence – their reception from the earliest days. Josh's being made conspicuous, and the projectionist's dramatic and comedic revelation, thus also reflect the cinema of attractions' own orientation towards the audience and the problems that result.

Sherlock Jr.: the screen as attraction

By far the most celebrated on-screen projectionist in Hollywood, and beyond, is the protagonist of Buster Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.*. At the film's centre is a striking set of scenes in which the boy (Keaton) dreams he leaves his projection booth, while the movie is running, and is driven through the auditorium towards the screen. He launches himself through it and into the film within the film. This stunning trick has captured the imaginations of film fans and scholars alike. It has helped to cement Keaton's reputation as a cinematic innovator with an expert facility with, or instinct for, the medium. Henry Jenkins discusses *Sherlock Jr.*'s appeal to scholars of a modernist bent ready to embrace it as an instance of a 'countercinema'. He characterises such critics as distrustful of classical narrative cinema. He points to *Sherlock Jr.*'s 'fragmented' nature and its tricks that '[distract] from larger plot goals'.[33] These features attract scholars to the film, or repel them, depending on their conception of the functions film ought to perform. The present analysis of *Sherlock Jr.* examines the dialectic

[33] Henry Jenkins, '"This Fellow Keaton Seems to Be the Whole Show": Buster Keaton, Interrupted Performance, and the Vaudeville Aesthetic', in Andrew Horton (ed.), *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 29-30.

between attractions and narrative within the film. By these means it aims to explore the film's relations to its spectators.

Gunning situates his formulation of the cinema of attractions in relation to the work of contemporaries such as Donald Crafton,[34] who also deploys the term 'attractions' in his study of how slapstick comedy mediates between spectacle and narrative in the 1920s.[35] Crafton raises a set of questions regarding the extent to which moments of spectacle – tricks, magic, illusion and stunts – are integrated into narrative. He puts the case that 'antinarrative elements' aren't mere excess, nor are they driven underground as Gunning believes,[36] but are relished for their own sake and precisely for their subversion of the story.[37] As we will see, Crafton's argument seems to encapsulate the way attractions function in *Sherlock Jr.*. However, the films to which he devotes longer discussion, *His Wooden Wedding* (Leo McCarey, 1925) and *Don Key (Son of Burro)* (Fred Guiol; James W Horne; JA Howe, 1926) are shorts rather than features, which he somewhat ignores. Indeed, when he mentions features he implies that the attractions within them are necessarily narrativised. In terms of Keaton's films, for example, he refers to *The General* (Clyde Bruckman; Buster Keaton, 1926) and briefly to *Seven Chances* (Buster Keaton, 1925). He says of the former that it 'set the hero's struggles within a determinant Griffithesque historical fiction' and he calls marriage within the latter 'a "narrativized" orchestration of delays'.[38] My analysis will contend that *Sherlock Jr.*'s narrative is as arbitrary as its illusions, stunts and tricks. In other words, when studying *Sherlock Jr.* we needn't approach it from a perspective of

[34] Tom Gunning, 'Attractions: How They Came into the World', in Wanda Strauven (ed.), *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), pp. 31-9.
[35] Crafton, pp. 106-19.
[36] Ibid., p. 111.
[37] Ibid., pp. 118-9.
[38] Ibid., p. 109 and p. 364, n. 15.

working out how anomalous, digressive, spectacular set-pieces are incorporated into the narrative with relative degrees of success. Rather, it is as, if not more, valid to reverse the normal direction of concern and question the status of the story. I hope to demonstrate that *Sherlock Jr.* is fundamentally, even overtly, antipathetic towards film's storytelling brief and conventions. Moreover, I want to show that the film lays bare the contingency of plot and seeks to forge a connection with the audience by extending its attractions.

Despite *Sherlock Jr.*'s ambivalence towards narrative, there is, nonetheless, an identifiable story: that of a 'boy', as he is described in the intertitles, who aspires to be a detective and to marry 'the girl in the case' (Kathryn McGuire). His plans are scuppered by a rival for her affections, 'the local sheik' (Ward Crane).[39] The rival steals a pocket watch belonging to the girl's father (Joe Keaton) and incriminates the boy by sabotaging his attempt to prove himself a sleuth. The boy is banished from the house. As he returns to his projectionist's job, his sweetheart efficiently establishes his innocence by visiting the shop where the rival pawned the watch. Back in the projection booth, the boy falls asleep while showing the melodrama, 'Hearts and Pearls'. He dreams that he enters the movie by jumping through the screen. After briefly vanishing, he reappears in the guise of an alter ego, Sherlock Jr, who is called in to solve the case of a stolen string of pearls. After a series of capers, Sherlock Jr recovers the pearls and saves the heroine (who assumes the form of the boy's sweetheart) from the clutches of a gang headed by the rival's oneiric doppelganger. However, just as a car chase looks as though it will end with the detective and heroine drowning, the boy awakens in the projection

[39] This is an allusion to *The Sheik* (George Melford, 1921) starring Hollywood heartthrob Rudolph Valentino in the title role.

booth. His sweetheart arrives and apologises for her father's sending him away in disgrace. In wooing her inexpertly once again, the boy looks for guidance through the viewing port to the romantic gestures of the hero of 'Hearts and Pearls'. Finally, the boy scratches his head in bewilderment in response to the last shot of 'Hearts and Pearls', included by way of an epilogue, which projects a future vision of its protagonists in a domestic setting with children.

An introductory title card informs us that the film is a kind of fable about the foolhardiness of attempting to do justice to two tasks at once. Though it shores up the notion that the film's story bears a certain weight by attaching a moral lesson, it equally hints that *Sherlock Jr.*'s own multiple narratives and fragmentary nature are problematic. During the opening scene that follows the introductory titles, the theatre manager is sarcastic in his insistence that the boy clean the cinema before indulging his detective 'training'. His angry intervention highlights the diegetic bubble of the detective world the boy mentally inhabits by bursting it. Such an introduction signals *Sherlock Jr.*'s divided narrative focus.

Our first view of the boy presents him, accordingly, as a hybrid figure who is part detective and part trademark Keaton hero. As we cut from the opening long shot of him to a medium close-up, we recognise the Keatonian hero first; by his eyes, porkpie hat and clip-on tie. The detective manual we can't fail to notice, because he holds in front of his face, conceals a false moustache. His eyes momentarily stop swivelling from side to side in a reading motion and very briefly glance directly at us as if he has caught us watching him. As he then lowers the book, he reveals his disguise. This reverses the usual sequence of events in which the disguise appears first and is subsequently removed to show a true identity. The reversal prefigures the way *Sherlock Jr.* consistently deludes us by defying the expectations it has created

(figs. 1.6a and 1.6b). The props of the synthetic moustache, magnifying glass and detective manual evoke the diegesis the film's title anticipates. At the same time, they demote it to a ludic, 'dress-up', make-believe realm. Keaton's seeming to reveal his disguise in direct response to his perception of us is an arch or playful gesture. A dichotomy between attractions, represented by revelations and direct address, and narrative, conjured by the props of crime detection, is thus already in evidence in micro-gestures and elements attending the first two shots of the film.

The film's opening is consistent with much of the frame story in which Keaton's character switches between his mundane projectionist's job and acting out his detective fantasy. After he accidentally implicates himself – in the eyes of his girlfriend's household – in the pocket-watch theft, a title card re-introduces his operating role as his 'other job'. This strikes an ironic note since we are unlikely to have started to believe that his incompetent detective work constitutes a rival occupation. Yet it subtly raises the question of the projectionist's significance in a film in which the most sustained diegesis is that of the crime story in its various forms. Jenkins refers to a commonly held view among scholars that *Sherlock Jr.* is 'profoundly aware of the institutions and practices of cinema' and 'force[s] the spectator to think about what it means to watch a movie and what place Hollywood fantasy plays in our lives'.[40] My contention is that the projectionist character achieves this, not simply because he is a projectionist who enters the film, but because he interrupts and subverts film narrative by substituting attractions.

[40] Jenkins, p. 30.

Figures 1.6a and 1.6b. In *Sherlock Jr.* Keaton's trademark identity is established first (1.6a). He subsequently reveals a disguise (1.6b)

Daniel Moews refers to a title card missing from the *Sherlock Jr.* print published by Kino International, which has been my source and is in wide circulation. It must be positioned between the boy's setting 'Hearts and Pearls' to project and his falling asleep. It states that, '"A projectionist's job is tedious ... and the monotony makes him fall asleep". Soon, "he dreams"'.[41] It is to be assumed the intertitle was excised from later prints because, even without it, the viewer comprehends that the boy's dreaming self leaves his sleeping body behind in the booth when he makes his way to the auditorium. While the title's inclusion explicitly calls the projectionist's duties boring, its removal in later versions implies that it is 'Hearts and Pearls' that sends him to sleep rather than weariness with the job. Perhaps such a distinction is moot if it is assumed that the stimulation provided by the projectionist's duties largely depends on his enjoying the films he is required to run. In any case, the title card displayed on the diegetic screen, and which introduces 'Hearts and Pearls', names its producer 'The Veronal Film Company' after a sedative. This implies that the

[41] Daniel Moews, *Keaton: The Silent Features Close Up* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1977), p. 86. The ellipsis in the citation from the title card is Moews' or the card's own. Moews notes that, apart from the version of *Sherlock Jr.* which includes the title described (with which he is familiar), a print exists from which around five have been cut. This leads one to speculate that the version with fewer cards is the one that has prevailed in having been made accessible to the contemporary viewer.

romantic melodrama cum detective story is sleep-inducing, which supports the argument I advance in the present analysis about *Sherlock Jr.*'s privileging attractions over story. Indeed, Keaton himself was open about the secondary status of the story.

> Now I laid out a few of these tricks. Some of the tricks I knew from the stage. I got that batch of stuff together and said I can't do it and tell a legitimate story because they're illusions and they're … some of them are clown gags, some Houdini, some Ching Ling Foo. It's got to come in a dream. To get what we're after, got to be a projectionist in a projecting room. Once you fall asleep, you visualise yourself as one of the important characters in the picture you're showing and go down, out of the projection room. Go right down there and walk up to the screen and become a part of it. Now you tell your own story. I think the reasoning we started off on that story was that I had one of the best cameramen in … in the picture business, Elgin Lessley ...[42]

The boy's substitution of 'Hearts and Pearls' for an alternative proffers slapstick as an antidote. His falling asleep in response to the melodrama betrays consciousness of how films are received by viewers.

The projectionist's slumber not only reinforces the idea that plot-heavy films might be boring, but it identifies him with the audience by showing his susceptibility to the Veronal Film Company's production and its effects. One of *Sherlock Jr.*'s ambiguities is that the audience seems not to perceive the boy's approach to the screen or his attempts to pass through it. The obliviousness of the audience is clarified when, at one point, the boy appears to appeal to them for support as he tries to cross the boundary (fig. 1.7). The diegetic viewers are static and unresponsive. Nor do members of the orchestra react when the boy is repeatedly thrown into their midst when ejected from the screen. The audience's apparent non-perception is easily explicable in that they behave as

[42] Buster Keaton quoted in *Buster Keaton: A Hard Act to Follow*, a TV documentary written and produced by Kevin Brownlow and David Gill for Thames Television in the UK in 1987.

the projectionist's dream dictates. On the other hand, a possible implication, which is never considered by critics, is that the audience shares the dream. This would explain why the projectionist doesn't, apparently, have to wake up and interrupt his dream in order to change the reels of 'Hearts and Pearls', which is advertised, after all, as a five-part film. No doubt *Sherlock Jr.*'s being a comedy discourages one from dwelling on this plot hole, which may be felt relatively unimportant in a film in which the story is secondary. However, there would be no need for the reel change if the identification between projectionist and audience were total so that they were all affected by Veronal and dreamt as a collective. Indeed, after the boy's extended attempts to enter the movie finally succeed, a tracking shot that starts by framing the diegetic screen in long shot, but then moves us closer and closer until the edges of the screen and the film frame meet and merge, seems to transport us over the threshold and into the film in the film too. Perhaps this tracking shot expresses the idea that the audience joins the boy in his hallucination and crosses the screen boundary after him. The boy's approaching the film via the auditorium and the screen rather than, say, through the projector or the celluloid frame, positions him as an audience member as well, even if a highly privileged one.

Figure 1.7. *Sherlock Jr.*'s boy appeals to the audience

In terms of the example *Sherlock Jr.*'s boy sets 1920s' audiences, he behaves similarly to Josh. It is we who judge his actions differently. That is to say, what is idiotic and disruptive conduct in *Uncle Josh* is admirable in *Sherlock Jr.*, and is licensed by the boy's dream. Indeed, it is the very passivity of the audience which is a problem as far as *Sherlock Jr.* is concerned. Paradoxically, the boy-projectionist overcomes this in his sleep. Thus slapstick mandates active, lively audiences.

Rudimentary plot elements and characters are transposed from the framing narrative to the film in the film so that the story of the confidence trickster and jewellery thief laying siege to a respectable family and its marriageable daughter is staged twice over. This recycling or repackaging of a story reduces the plot to a convenient device inasmuch as it is easily transferrable between diegetic realms. As has been observed by others, *Sherlock Jr.* mocks melodrama[43] and the archetype of the matinee idol or 'sheik'. The alternative title of 'Hearts and Pearls' is the facetiously alliterative 'The Lounge Lizard's Lost Love', which is advertised outside of the movie theatre along with several extra-diegetic recent releases by Metro Pictures (who distributed *Sherlock Jr.*). These are mainly straight melodramas based around loves lost and regained, and some feature exotic heroes.[44] The plot of one such, *Rouged Lips* (Harold M Shaw, 1923), revolves round a chorus girl who dresses in such a way as to persuade a wealthy suitor she is of the same social class until her string of imitation pearls betrays her. Since *Sherlock Jr.*, too, connects pearls, aspiration and romance going awry, one wonders whether

[43] Kathleen Rowe Karlyn, 'The Detective and the Fool: Or, the Mystery of Manhood in *Sherlock Jr.*', in Andrew Horton (ed.), *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 112.
[44] The advertised melodramas include *Scaramouche* (Rex Ingram), *The Fog* (Paul Powell), *Rouged Lips* (Harold M Shaw) and *A Wife's Romance* (Thomas N Heffron, all 1923).

Keaton and his writers borrowed from surrounding productions or looked to incorporate their elements mockingly. Other films referenced in the same scene such as *Mud and Sand* (Gilbert Pratt, 1922)[45] and *Strangers of the Night* (Fred Niblo, 1923) are comedies that spoof melodramatic plots in similar ways to *Sherlock Jr.*. The latter prominently features the protagonist's dreaming of adventure.

Figures 1.8a and 1.8b. The heroine of *Sherlock Holmes* (1922) (1.8a) and that of *Sherlock Jr.* (1.8b) are similarly styled

Of considerably more prominence in terms of filmic reference is the promise of Holmesian pastiche made in *Sherlock Jr.*'s title. In addition, the boy's sweetheart resembles Alice, the love interest of the eponymous hero of *Sherlock Holmes* (Albert Parker, 1922) played by DW Griffith favourite, Carol Dempster. In this earlier, dramatic, big-budget Holmes' outing, the detective (John Barrymore), bumps his head as a callow youth, and regains consciousness to find a plaid-frocked and ringleted Alice, who is still, at this stage, a young girl, kneeling over him in concern. Partway through both

[45] *Mud and Sand* is a spoof of *Blood and Sand* (Fred Niblo, 1922) starring Stan Laurel as Rhubarb Vaselino in a parody of Valentino. Of the films quoted in the scene, I haven't been able to access *Rouged Lips*, *Strangers of the Night*, *The Fog* or *A Wife's Romance* and have taken information about their plots from the American Film Institute's online catalogue. The latter three are listed by the US' National Film Preservation Board as lost films. See Steve Leggett, 'List of 7200 Lost US Silent Feature Films 1912-29', *The Library of Congress*, (29 December 2016) <https://www.loc.gov/programs/static/national-film-preservation-board/documents/Lost%20silent.updated_122916.pdf>, accessed 26 April 2018.

Sherlock Jr. and *Sherlock Holmes*, their heroines morph into modern flapper types. Although *Sherlock Jr.* is far from a parody of Barrymore's *Sherlock Holmes* specifically, its similarly styled heroine is an example of its comedic allusion to the critically and commercially successful forerunner (figs. 1.8a and 1.8b).[46] The appellation 'Sherlock Jr', in its allusion to the Holmes character, invokes a diegesis pre-extant in popular imagination. The contemporary viewer unfamiliar with Holmes' literary iteration is nonetheless likely to be conversant with the rich history of filmic adaptation and appropriation of the detective's world evidenced by such films as *Miss Sherlock Holmes* (Edwin S Porter, 1908), *A Squeedunk Sherlock Holmes* (made by the Edison Company in 1909 featuring rubes), *Surelock Jones, Detective* (1912), *Burstup Homes* (Alice Guy, 1913), *Jawlock Jones* (1914) and *Sherlock Brown* (Bayard Veiller, 1922).[47] This is to name but a selection of the comedies. In *Sherlock Jr.*, the case of the stolen pocket watch seems to produce a 'Sherlock Jr' (in the form of the boy's amateur detective) in advance of the protagonist's reappearance as Sherlock Jr proper. A pre-established diegesis, and a story that repeats itself across the

---

[46] The scenes leading up to, and including, those portraying Barrymore's Holmes' first encounter with Alice represent a comedic interlude in an otherwise straight drama. Holmes' outdoor philosophical musings are interspersed with close-ups on his notebook, in which he has listed his 'limitations' as part of his groping for a future direction for his life. This resonates with the naivety of *Sherlock Jr.*'s boy's 'How to Be a Detective' and its somewhat puerile approach to the detection of crime, conveyed to us several times in close-ups on passages from the manual.

[47] *Sherlock Brown* is a five-reel comedy-drama also released by Metro. The National Film Preservation Board lists it as a lost film (see Leggett). From the American Film Institute's synopsis (American Film Institute, '*Sherlock Brown*', *American Film Institute*, (n. d.) <https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/12042>, accessed 18 April 2018) we can glean that it has some aspects in common with *Sherlock Jr.*:

> William Brown, who wants to become a detective, writes to an agency and receives for $5 a tin badge. At the same time a secret government formula for explosives is stolen from Lieutenant Musgrave, to whom Brown promises his aid. Meanwhile, Musgrave is hospitalized in delirium and utters the name "Wallace" to his sister, Barbara, who discovers that Wallace has hidden the formula in a flowerpot and follows him to his apartment. There, during a struggle, a book on flying alerts Brown. He accidentally discovers the secret formula, and Barbara escapes with the paper but is sidetracked on her way to a government agent. Following numerous complications and a long chase, Sherlock Brown succeeds in tracking down the conspirators, regaining the formula, and winning the heart of Barbara.

film's frame and the film in the film, indicate the thinness of *Sherlock Jr.*'s narrative.

Filmmaking virtuosity or complexity therefore resides in attractions: in camera tricks, the engineering of illusions and physical feats. There are several passages of *Sherlock Jr.* in which the staging of stunts clearly takes precedence over narrative concerns. A prominent example of this is the much discussed sequence in which the boy, while attempting to pass through the screen, is subjected to numerous rapid, unmotivated changes of setting which endanger life and limb. Since it stands alone in the sense of its not obviously relating to the rest of the film in narrative terms, at least one commentator suggests it is indulgent or gratuitous, which is also revealing of his own valorisation of plot.[48] Nonetheless, the point supports *Sherlock Jr.*'s supplying copious sources of pleasure other than narrative. Conveniently, the detective story, too, provides numerous premises for the staging of stunts, despite their often disruptive and digressive effects.

The boy's passage through the screen and into the second filmic diegesis isn't only an outstanding attraction, it bridges narratives, as does the boy's falling asleep and proceeding to dream. Crafton defines a 'semidiegetic' scene in *His Wooden Wedding* as 'further[ing] the narrative in a crucial way … but [being] also predominantly a spectacle, and the sequence which provokes the most belly laughs in viewers'.[49] In these terms we might surely also describe *Sherlock Jr.*'s screen passage as semidiegetic. It is certainly provocative. However, a sticking point is the extent to which it 'furthers the

[48] Dan Georgakas, 'The Purple Rose of Keaton', in Andrew Horton (ed.), *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 134-5. He calls the screen-passage sequences 'narrative non sequiturs' and says, 'A less charitable view is that these are comic vignettes that Keaton could not otherwise weave into the plot but did not have the artistic willpower to omit'.
[49] Crafton, p. 115.

narrative'. It certainly moves *Sherlock Jr.* further on in temporal terms. Otherwise it brings the first part of the film to a close and anticipates a second part which is derivative of its forerunner. In this sense, it has an unusual function to re-run or start the same narrative again.

The manner of execution of the screen passage maximises spectacle at the expense of narrative flow. The boy's dream could have had him drift gently over the screen's threshold and into the film in the film in a smooth flight. However, the crossing is belaboured for effect. The boy's first leap into the screen brings him into physical contact with a figure who has taken the form of his real-life rival. Rather than extend the scuffle between them that ensues, the rival reverses the stunt performed and throws the boy back out of the screen and into the orchestra pit. Since this necessitates the boy's approaching the screen a second time, it prolongs the passage, something which exploits the trick or 'attraction' to its fullest.

In fact, the sequence is extended even further as it comprises two differently executed illusions from a technical point of view. As the boy approaches the screen for the first time it displays what appears to be a long shot of a bedroom, which is entered by the film's heroine, played by the girl, and the rival. A frame-like construction in front of a stage set describes the 'screen' at this point. In order to create the illusion of the boy's miraculous frontal leap from the auditorium into the screen, Keaton jumps over its bottom edge into a space which is, in reality, contiguous with the rest of the movie-theatre mise-en-scène. The bright lighting of the stage gives the 'screen' a film frame's luminous 'surface'.[50] The vast space is presented as the young woman's

[50] An interview with Keaton corroborates that this was how the screen passage was done. See Christopher Bishop and Buster Keaton, 'An Interview with Buster Keaton', *Film Quarterly* 12:1 (Autumn 1958), p. 17.

boudoir. Consequently, one of the subtler dimensions of this trick is that when the boy launches himself through the screen he, like his rival, trespasses into her bedroom though one suspects that the viewer's astonishment at the screen passage overshadows this.

The boy's second attempt to enter the screen after being thrown out, sees the image behind him cut away from the boudoir to the mansion's frontage, so that after his leap he is confronted with a door. This initiates the section of the film which is excessive to some in terms of its lack of narrative motivation. Exclusion from the mansion not only recalls his being sent away from his sweetheart's home in the frame story. The locked door, together with the boy's non-admittance into the film as a whole, anticipates the attempts of the criminals in the dream-film to kill his alter ego. Considered as such, the montage is a forewarning of the dangers to come expressed on a rather abstract, oneiric and psychological level. Its relation to narrative is subtle.

This montage sequence, unlike the first screen passage, is executed by means of editing rather than *trompe l'oeil* staging. The boy is transported, as a result of cuts, through several dramatic landscapes and hazardous situations including city streets bustling with traffic and hurrying pedestrians; the edge of a rocky precipice; a jungle populated with lions; a thicket of cacti; railroad tracks; a rock in the middle of the sea; a snowbank and a garden with a disappearing tree. The boy's remaining in Keaton's trademark costume throughout makes him appear incongruous with most of the environments into which he is thrown. The continuity of his actions across shots isolates him in the sequence, as though his bodily integrity prevents him becoming fully subsumed into, or places him adjacent to and somehow at odds with, the moving image. An otherwise discontinuous sequence is thereby unified and governed by non-

accommodation of the boy, by putting him continually in harm's way. The extremes of climate and dramatic scenery express the same hostility and heightens tensions within the film frame between continuity and interruption; between the boy's wanting to remain whole and alive but also to be integrated within the diegesis. In toto, the screen-passage scenes speak to both Keaton's exceptional skills as an on-screen, and stage, performer and acrobat, but more importantly, to his expertise at using the space of the film frame, the camera and editing in order to craft a gag. The scene is thus an interval during which we are encouraged to appreciate pleasures of a spectacular order rather than a progression of the narrative.

The frame story isn't devoid of attractions. One of its climaxes is the boy's using the spout on a water tower to slow his descent from the top of a moving boxcar train. This stunt was filmed in long shot without visible cuts, suggesting that it was performed and recorded as we see it in an uninterrupted take.[51] Other comic set-pieces from this section of the film are generated by Keaton's recreation of bits of vaudeville business and are dismissed in a contemporary review as 'hoke' and 'bunk', such as slipping on a banana skin or the fly-paper trick.[52] However, the screen-passage sequence isn't only *Sherlock Jr.*'s most remarkable sequence, it also marks an escalation in spectacle by introducing visual effects as a result of camera trickery, editing, compositing or a combination of these to create surprise, mystery or illusion. These later attractions rely on something other than Keaton's physical and performative prowess. Indeed, the film in the film creates a space in which

[51] It is an irony that this comparatively tame-looking set-piece is the likely cause of Keaton's broken neck, an injury doctors only discovered years after he performed the stunt. See ibid., p. 22.

[52] The review appeared in the issue of *Variety* dated 28 May 1924 and is reproduced in Andrew Horton (ed.), *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 180.

attractions are extended and celebrated. For example, in an echo of the screen passage, Sherlock Jr, prior to embarking on his pursuit of the absconded villains, appears to walk through a looking glass. This illusion is staged similarly to the initial leap through the screen in terms of its use of *trompe l'oeil*. The mise-en-scène creates adjoining rooms so identical (even down to the way the curtains in each flutter in the breeze) that they 'reflect' each other and suggest the presence of a mirror. This is reinforced by the detective's gesturing as if to check his reflection in it. When he appears to traverse the 'mirror', the scene not only recalls the screen passage but gestures towards the betrayal of one of the methods by which it was achieved. The detective then turns dials on a door as if opening a safe. However, this door unexpectedly gives out onto a bustling street and Sherlock Jr uses it to exit the mansion. Having watched this exit many times, the means by which it might have been achieved technically remain obscure as far as my own imagination and research are concerned. One would imagine that the bustling street and moving trolley we glimpse beyond the door frame were created by compositing: by the placement of a location shot within the frame of an interior. Yet Sherlock Jr moves from the interior through the door and onto the street, seemingly without a cut. On a narrative level, this is a 'redress' to the closed door which heralds the montage sequence in the screen-passage scene. In invoking the earlier montage once again, it draws attention to the film's concern with creating baffling effects. Later, a stunt takes place in the vicinity of the criminal gang's lair which involves the dissolution of one of the building's walls as we view its exterior. The disappearance of the wall reveals the spectacle of Sherlock Jr jumping through a hoop and landing in a change of clothes that disguises him as a woman in a bonnet and shawl. A similar trick occurs later in which he seems to vanish while

jumping into an open suitcase worn round the neck of his assistant, Gillette (Ford West), who is dressed in the garb of a pedlar-woman. Peter F Parshall sees Gillette's intermittent presence and his having designed the devices, tricks, shifts and intrigues by means of which Sherlock Jr escapes the villains as making him, as opposed to the detective, the true mastermind.[53] In the context of the film in the film's functioning as a kind of repository for the film's most involved and stunning set-pieces, Gillette's explanatory function is strategic in that it highlights and extends attractions. An earlier section of the film in the film is a protracted billiards game in which the butler (Erwin Connelly) has set up a range of gadgets and snares, the workings of which he reveals to the criminal gang leader, and to us, in advance so that we might relish the detective's encounters and dealings with the traps. With such a focus on tricks, the film in the film benefits from a narrative economy facilitated by a conceptual 'Sherlock Jr' established not only in the frame story but by previous filmic and multi-media parodies.[54] Moreover, these set-pieces, though they stand out because they are amazing to behold, allow Sherlock Jr to elude the villain and his heavies and therefore to prolong pursuit and narrative. In other words, they have a semidiegetic function in Crafton's terms in straddling attraction and narrative.

According to Charles Wolfe, Keaton's sixth feature-length film, *Seven Chances*, made a year after *Sherlock Jr.*, marked Keaton's

> … efforts to craft a new kind of slapstick film. Film comedy based simply on "stunts" was nearly exhausted, he explained. He now sought to apply "principles of conventional picture comedy to a story that is good enough to stand on its merits." … This entailed awareness of the expectations of

[53] Peter F Parshall, 'Houdini's Protégé: Buster Keaton in *Sherlock Jr.*', in Andrew Horton (ed.), *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 80-5.
[54] The inclusion of the character of Gillette, the detective's assistant, is an allusion to a stage play entitled *Sherlock Holmes* which was co-written by William Gillette and Arthur Conan Doyle in 1899 and starred Gillette in the title role when it was performed in the US. The *Sherlock Holmes* of 1922 starring John Barrymore was adapted from Gillette's play.

> different viewers, since comedy films should "be broad enough to please the large body of the public" but also "have enough subtle satire to satisfy the most critical, discriminating person in the audience." Reconciling the demands of "highbrows," who would be "antagonized by nothing but hokum," and "the overwhelming majority who insist on being made to laugh no matter what methods" was a problem he was "bothered with day and night."[55]

In other words, one of Keaton's major concerns, according to the 1924 interview excerpted above, is his responsibility to the audience. It is certainly possible that *Sherlock Jr.*'s performance at the box office influenced his thinking. When looking back over the period decades later in 1958, he concedes that *Sherlock Jr.* wasn't received as well as many of his other films and speculates that, 'Maybe it was because at the time it was released the audience didn't pay attention to the trick stunts that were in the picture'.[56] In feeling thus, Keaton suggests that *Sherlock Jr.* perhaps staked too much upon the success of spectacular set pieces at the expense of other pleasures, and his 1924 interview hints that a developed story is one such. His choice of words has him holding the audience and their inattention accountable as well: they hadn't responded as directed by the action. Key to Keaton's successful transition to the feature-length format, as far as he seems to have been concerned, is the negotiation or balance between attractions and narrative. The interviews also suggest that Keaton's main objective was that his films should find and please an audience, and that the tricks and stunts were mobilised towards connecting with spectators and garnering their approval even if, in practice, they didn't succeed in this as well as hoped. During the screen passage, the boy's

[55] Charles Wolfe, 'Buster Keaton: Comic Invention and the Art of Moving Pictures', in Patrice Petro (ed.), *Idols of Modernity: Movie Stars of the 1920s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010), p. 55. Wolfe quotes an interview with Keaton in an unsourced publication from 1924.
[56] Bishop, p. 19.

momentarily turning to the audience from the stage to appeal to them for support before he tries to enter the film symbolises this desire.

The protracted sequence in *Sherlock Jr.* in which the detective is pursued by the villains represents a chase, or narrative section, according to Crafton's opposition of pie and chase. The most spectacular part of the chase, which Sherlock Jr spends perched on the handlebars of a driverless motorcycle, subjects him to a journey he survives due to his lack of conscious control or agency; his blind faith that Gillette is in the driving seat. Just as he cannot meld with the image during the screen-passage montage, his precarious, exposed state in this sequence is an instance of partial integration of a slightly different order. This time, the impression created is that the narrative itself has a momentum to which the protagonist is merely incidental or along for the ride. The end of the chase, which also ends the film in the film submerges him in water, which is a counterpoint to the initial inhospitableness of the film image that conspired to exclude him. In a final act of spite on the part of the film in the film towards the boy, the story's resolution threatens his and the heroine's drowning rather than promising a happier union.

Back in the projection booth, after the boy has awoken, the romantic fade-out on 'Hearts and Pearls' isn't the final word on its characters' happiness. Instead, a subsequent fade-in reveals a rather different tableau featuring the same pair. The woman's slinky, strappy evening gown, pearls and silk headscarf has transformed into a long-sleeved house dress trimmed with a lace collar and cuffs. In her hair she wears a matching lace bow and she sits, sews and looks fondly at her erstwhile suitor who oscillates in a rocking chair while bouncing twin infants upon his knees. This isn't a cinematic attraction so much as an epilogue that is narratively redundant to 'Hearts and Pearls' since it has

already given us a happy-ever-after embrace. The extra tableau sets up *Sherlock Jr.*'s final gag, which is only realised by the subsequent shot upon which it ends: the boy's baffled reaction. Although his bewilderment is supposed, primarily, to be a joke about his sexual inexperience, it also implies his illiteracy in terms of reconstructing narrative. After all, even the youngest or most naïve viewer surely comprehends the portrait of the family unit as a 'conclusion', regardless of their ignorance of the mechanics of reproduction. The boy's puzzlement about the provenance of the hero's children implies that he understands his romantic gestures sufficiently to imitate them but his comprehension falls short of allowing him to 'read' their logical trajectory. Therefore, he passively resists narrative through his lack of comprehension. Indeed, Crafton describes slapstick as a genre as 'resist[ing] bourgeois legibility and rationality'.[57]

Sherlock Jr.'s ending implies the boy's failure to progress; in other words, a failure to take the journey routinely promised by narrative. Crafton's observation regarding *His Wooden Wedding* equally applies to *Sherlock Jr.*:

> By the time the final closure is achieved, sealed with a kiss between the betrothed, the audience experiences relief, but also a temporal waste, a *temps perdu* because the "story" has been set back to a time before the film began (the plans for a new wedding have to be made). All that transpired was "excess" – slapstick.[58]

We aren't led to believe the boy might look forward to the career for which he has studied, and we are prepared from the first for its abortive end by the aforementioned early title card that establishes *Sherlock Jr.* as a 'health warning' about the dangers of trying to do two things at once. The closing

[57] Ibid., p. 116.
[58] Ibid., p. 115.

impression is of his disillusion, which is to say, he now holds no professional aspirations beyond the projection booth, nor does the projection booth itself offer prospects. On a personal level, marriage to his sweetheart is consistently beset by problems the final scene 'resolves' in a highly ambivalent way by comedically casting his capacities as a husband in a dubious light. However, the circularity of the narrative, and its indefinite postponement of a happy ever after, is primarily interesting for the way in which it continues the dialectic between attractions and narrative. Even to the last, the boy remains an outsider. Not only does his integration with both the film image and the narrative fail, as a projectionist he is disabused of his own notional control of the image or the story.

Responding to Crafton's analysis of the dialectic between attractions and narrative in 1920s slapstick, Gunning 'points out that parodies of narratives are still narratives "in which narrative logic is not so much ignored as laid bare."'[59] If *Sherlock Jr.* reveals the workings of film narrative, it does so in such a way as to pillory the hackneyed plots of melodrama and the detective story and thereby explicitly to resist a story-telling mission. Spectatorial arousal and provocation, whether to laughter, amazement or some other response, appear to be its governing principle. In terms of the transient considerations of box office and contemporary popularity, *Sherlock Jr.* is a failed experiment that Keaton later sought to rectify by recuperating narrative as one of film's pleasures. If *Sherlock Jr.* is often judged avant-garde it is a recognition of its mounting a seeming challenge to the classical narrative tradition with its disdain for story and its seeking a direct connection to the audience outside of narrative by means of attractions. In other words, scholarship isn't wrong in its hunch that

[59] Ibid., p. 117.

Sherlock Jr. 'force[s] the spectator to think about what it means to watch a movie and what place Hollywood fantasy plays in our lives'.[60] Yet much of it fails adequately to identify the specific aspects of the medium or its spectatorship with which *Sherlock Jr.* is concerned.

I have aimed to show that *Sherlock Jr.* is a receptacle for a series of attractions designed to amaze the audience and to provoke them to wonder at their method of accomplishment. Like the revelation of the projectionist in *Uncle Josh*, several of the tricks in *Sherlock Jr.* refer to vaudeville – as explored by Jenkins – and stage magic. As such, they are more blatant than anything that appears in *Uncle Josh* in their aim to provoke the audience's astonishment as well as their laughter, and they continue along the same line in terms of perpetuating the cinema of attractions' orientation towards the audience. The participative audience, as opposed to the one lulled into dreaming, is especially valued in *Sherlock Jr.*. This is little wonder since a comedy's success is generally predicated on its eliciting an active response in the form of laughter. Making the audience feel, and then convert its emotions into noise or response, creates an instant feedback mechanism that becomes a barometer or yardstick of effectiveness. Both *Uncle Josh* and *Sherlock Jr.* characterise the relationship between film and audience as a two-way interaction. In the later film, the boy himself stands as a reproach to the immobile audience who fail to respond to his appeals as he prepares to cross the screen. Keaton's own thoughts on *Sherlock Jr.* and his other films, quoted above, only confirm what critics are slow to detect in the film itself: that it is fundamentally shaped by its provocation of, and address to, audiences and its notion that spectacle is more powerful and appealing than the hackneyed plots of many 1920s' dramas. In a terrain of

[60] Jenkins, p. 30.

sheiks and sleuths, the projectionist aims to become the anti-hero that makes the audience laugh, gasp and wonder rather than fall asleep.

The Projectionist: the self-conscious screen

The Projectionist hasn't so far attracted much attention from the academy. Yet it has been deemed culturally and artistically significant elsewhere. The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) invested $60,000 in its restoration.[61] Joe Dante, the director of such commercial hits as *Gremlins* (1984) and *Innerspace* (1987), as well as his earlier movie about the film business, which features a projectionist in a minor role, *Hollywood Boulevard* (1976), claims there is something of *The Projectionist* in all of his films.[62] The little critical writing which exists is concerned with its value as a cult film. Moreover, the protagonist's own taste in, and fanaticism about, movies portrays his predilection for B-movies, exploitation films, 1950s' invasion movies and the like.

The Projectionist is Harry Hurwitz's first feature-length film, which he made for the 'pittance' of $160,000[63] after leaving his teaching post in film production at New York University.[64] It was shot on location, and the handheld

---

[61] Gregory Lamberson, *Cheap Scares!: Low Budget Horror Filmmakers Share Their Secrets* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), p. 104.
[62] Richard Harland Smith, '*The Projectionist*', *TCM*, (n. d.) <http://tcm.tv/this-month/article/362740%7C362751/The-Projectionist.html>, accessed 21 July 2017. In 1968, the same year in which *The Projectionist* was shot, Dante, who was a student at the time, made a compilation film called *The Movie Orgy*, which shares similar features to *The Projectionist*. According to J Hoberman, *The Movie Orgy* was an 'epic barrage of cheap creature features, civil-defense training films, kiddie TV shows, trailers, cartoons, skin flicks, and newsreels of Richard Nixon…' See Hoberman's article 'Across the Movi-verse', *Film Comment* 48:2 (March/April 2012), p. 34. This article includes a longer account of *The Movie Orgy*, which I haven't seen and doesn't seem to have been made available for home viewing. He mentions that Dante and Jon Davison, with whom he made the film, showed it at New York University where it 'had its first big public screening' and where Hurwitz had worked prior to making *The Projectionist*.
[63] James Monaco, *The Movie Guide* (New York, NY: Perigee Books, 1992), p. 731.
[64] Harland Smith.

camera contributes significantly to its aesthetics, particularly during the scenes in which we follow the projectionist, Chuck, as he roams the New York streets. The diegetic movie house where Chuck works was a composite of 'the façade of an Upper West Side cinema and the projection booth of an Asbury Park theater' and 'the screening room of a midtown film laboratory'.[65]

Although *The Projectionist* was shot in 1968, its editing took two or three years because of the need to raise funds with which to finish it and to gain the Hollywood studios' permission for its incorporation of movie clips. In terms of its commercial fortunes, the film failed to appeal to these same studios, who controlled distribution.[66] It was taken instead by a distributor specialising in horror, Maron Films,[67] which no doubt did little to discourage its being regarded primarily as a cult offering. *The Projectionist*'s scant theatrical release is probably why it escapes the notice of scholars of New Hollywood. Its commercial marginalisation all but discounts any possible contribution on its part to a 'Hollywood renaissance'.[68] Nonetheless, as the present analysis aims to reveal, the film levels a powerful, coherent critique at Hollywood.

Its experimentation with form is clearly politically motivated. It frequently switches between narrative sequences and rapid montage assembled largely from film clips. The former are generally filmed with a handheld camera, which visibly moves and wobbles to keep characters in long or medium shot. During scenes in which dialogue is spoken, the occasional close-up is inserted. Between the montages of clips on one hand, and the handheld camera on the other, the film is made mostly in a self-conscious style. This departs from the

---

[65] Ibid.
[66] Geoff King, *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (London: IB Tauris, 2002), p. 7.
[67] Tino Balio, *The Foreign Film Renaissance on American Screens, 1946-1973* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), p. 254.
[68] King, p. 11.

classical narrative style that aims for its own invisibility and conceals its workings. It is another way in which *The Projectionist* distinguishes itself from standard Hollywood fare. In addition, its New York setting is also significant. It both indicates the film's non-Hollywood circumstances of production, and expresses, in geographical terms, its critical distance from the studios. At the same time as locating it on the opposite coast to Hollywood, scenes which unfold on or near Broadway, and which include a film premiere, acknowledge that New York is also steeped in movie culture and has its own complicated perspective on, and relationship with, Hollywood. In these regards, *The Projectionist* is no less interrogative of classical narrative cinema than the more revered 1960s' and '70s' productions from the likes of Dennis Hopper or Martin Scorsese, even if its contemporary public impact was negligible.

The Projectionist's narrative structure is complicated by its inclusion of four plotlines. In the first place is a frame story which is distinguished from the others, which are filmed in black and white, by being shot in colour. It relates a day in the projectionist's life punctuated with altercations with the dictatorial cinema manager, Renaldi (Rodney Dangerfield),[69] conversations with colleagues and a peregrination of New York City. Second is a fantasy in which Chuck plays a heroic alter ego named Captain Flash. In this story, Flash's task is to protect a scientist who has invented a 'death ray', and his daughter, who are being pursued by a villain called The Bat. Footage is used in the fantasy

[69] The cinema manager in *Sherlock Jr.*, too, is portrayed as impatient with the boy's tendency to daydream, as is mentioned above. In *The Projectionist* the relationship between manager and projectionist is antagonistic to the point of Renaldi's pursuing a vendetta against Chuck. To Renaldi's chagrin, Chuck is protected by his union membership. In the Captain Flash sequences, Flash's nemesis, The Bat, who is played by Renaldi, is allied with Nazis and fascists. We cannot claim to be privy to Chuck's personal politics beyond his union membership and the fact that his opposition to Renaldi and The Bat position him as antifascist. Yet at the same time, The Bat's alliances suggest that fascism, though ostensibly defeated in the second world war, hasn't been dispatched completely, and that such tendencies persist within the US.

from films as diverse as *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942), *Flash Gordon* (Frederick Stephani, 1936) and *Gunga Din* (George Stevens, 1939). Thirdly, Chuck regales his usher friend, Harry (Harry Hurwitz), with a story about meeting a beautiful woman (Ina Balin) on 155th Street. This tale, too, is broken up into episodes that he relates at intervals by means of more black and white sequences which depict their meeting and walking through New York together while a mellifluous, romantic melody plays. Again, no dialogue is spoken. Finally, Chuck introduces montage sequences and mock-ups of theatrical trailers often by gazing at a screen, a photograph or even a view of the city. These are wholly made up of footage from black and white films of various genres and eras, of newsreels and journalistic still images.

My analysis of *The Projectionist* will proceed along four strands of discussion. Firstly, I will argue that the film is a partial and very loose re-working of *Sherlock Jr.*, which performs many of the functions scholars claim for Keaton's film, as though Hurwitz was one of the first to observe, and greatly to extend in the form of his own film, the earlier film's potential for cinematic critique. My second and main concern is the meaning of screens. *The Projectionist* foregrounds screens differently to *Uncle Josh* and *Sherlock Jr.* and both conceals and reveals them as part of what I will highlight as its concern with theatrical exhibition and its implications. Thirdly, I argue that Chuck's projectionist status accords him a privileged position vis-à-vis the image. Through this, the film problematises his proximity to screens and images and the extent to which he maintains critical distance from the films of the present and of his childhood. In other words, does he recognise the rhetorical power of images or merely buy into the same? Finally, I identify 'The Projectionist', a film

within the film which is intermittently revealed. This film in the film is a nexus where *The Projectionist*'s concerns with screens and spectators meet.

The significance of screens

Chuck interacts with screens in ways comparable with those of the rubes from earlier case studies. Moreover, *The Projectionist* makes 'rubes' of us by concealing intradiegetic screens. This occurs with the opening shot, which appears as a beige block that fills the film frame and marks the start and opening credits of *Gerald McBoing-Boing's Symphony* (Robert Cannon, 1953), an animation short. The beginning of *The Projectionist* is thus identical to that of the cartoon to the extent that one is initially confused about the film one is watching. When the frame judders and the animated images are wiped from it and replaced with whiteness, a slow zoom out reveals a proscenium arch and the blank screen beneath, while a slow handclap indicates the presence of a diegetic audience. Such a start to the film is no doubt most effective when viewed in a theatrical situation where it can be suggested, momentarily, that the actual screening has gone awry. This effect would require that *The Projectionist* be screened in a theatre. The interrupted screening's inscription in the movie (fig. 1.9), as an effect, looks forward to theatrical exhibition.[70] It can therefore be argued that from its first frame, *The Projectionist* playfully alludes to its own showing and the contingency and implications of screening in general.

[70] One assumes the prospect of *The Projectionist*'s home or TV viewing is unlikely to have been in the forefront of its makers' minds in 1971. It was shown on US TV on 16 March 2011 as part of a season of films in which Turner Classic Movies celebrated films preserved by MOMA. See Anne Morra, 'Turner Classic Movies Presents 24 Hours of Films Preserved by MoMA', *Inside/Out: A MOMA/MOMA PS1 Blog*, (15 March 2011) <https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2011/03/15/24-hour-marathon-of-films-preserved-bymoma-on-turner-classic-movies/>, accessed 18 April 2018. It hasn't been possible to determine whether *The Projectionist* was ever shown on TV prior to its MOMA restoration.

Figure 1.9. The inscription of a screening 'breakdown' in *The Projectionist*

The Projectionist's concerns extend to the exhibition of images beyond cinema. Chuck's foray onto the New York streets reveals an ongoing relationship with screens. The handheld camera follows him at a discreet distance so that he is always held in long shot and his speech is inaudible. Chuck's first stop bids us view him through a shop window as he enters the premises of a food vendor of unspecified ethnicity (fig. 1.10). Chuck's friendly manner with him, and his being gifted a sausage from the barbecue, impress us with his popularity and amiability as a neighbourhood character. The interposition between us and Chuck of distance and glass 'frames' him as agreeable. We see this shooting of Chuck through a shop window later when he buys some fast food from a white vendor, and shares a joke with him as well. This isn't to suggest Chuck's 'good guy' characterisation is false, but merely that it is put on display.

At one point Chuck, who is white, stops to chat chummily to, and pat the cheek of, an elderly black wheelchair user stationed on the sidewalk next to a white companion whose wheelchair is also visible. Though what passes between them is partially obscured by our distance and the fact that we cannot

hear what is being said, Chuck seems to respond to the pair's seeking of charity. It is an exaggeration to suggest that Chuck's interactions with society's marginalised figures lend him a Christ-like image. However, a scene later in the film makes much of America's Judeo-Christian foundations and the concept of brotherhood in racially troubled times. It seems to me, as I hope to show below, that apart from displaying the New York environment as a media-saturated landscape, one of the main objectives of Chuck's circulation through the city is to highlight the continued segregation of black from white. His generosity of spirit towards his fellow man is resonant in a film that elsewhere, parodically but explicitly, repeatedly refers to the concept of the 'good guy' and his associations.

Figure 1.10. *The Projectionist*'s Chuck (far right) 'framed' through a window as friendly with neighbourhood characters

Yet counter to the intermittent presentation of Chuck's essential goodness, runs a subtle undercurrent. Immediately after his interaction with the wheelchair users, he hesitates outside a grocery store as if contemplating entering. Two black men are in conversation, or making a transaction of some kind, in the doorway (fig. 1.11). A reverse shot shows Chuck reacting to this with a wary expression and zipping up his coat a little higher as if in defence

(fig. 1.12). We then cut to a Captain Flash sequence in which the hero is suddenly surrounded by The Bat's black-clad henchmen (fig. 1.13). The way Chuck's fantasy seems to confirm his feeling too uneasy to enter the store (we must assume on the grounds of unfamiliarity and his racial difference to its patrons), is muted, as it is only something we may infer rather than an underscored element of the narrative. Later, Chuck plays pool with white buddies,[71] which is tacit to an even greater degree as an illustration of the limits of racial integration. After his game, Chuck's walk takes him to an area where passers-by and shop owners are predominantly black. After visiting an adult shop, he picks up a newspaper bearing the headline 'The Reasons Sammy Davis' Black & White Marriage Couldn't Blend'. Having replaced this publication without purchasing it, Chuck quickly descends some steps to what looks like the subway, inviting us to infer that he is leaving the neighbourhood. This is confirmed by the next shot of him arriving at his apartment. Chuck's moments of positive interaction with both white and black neighbourhood figures punctuate what are seemingly uneventful street scenes. Yet in between friendly encounters Chuck experiences moments when de facto racial segregation is in evidence. In short, *The Projectionist* rewards reading beyond the moments of Chuck's displays of bonhomie to find a lower-key constellation of situations and truths that aren't privileged presentationally. One might wonder about the extent to which the filmmaker himself were aware of such elements and their implications. However, the briefly glimpsed headline about Sammy Davis Jr is surely no accident in the context of the way racial issues are highlighted elsewhere in the film.

[71] The pool scene could be an oblique homage to *Sherlock Jr.*'s virtuoso billiards sequence.

Figure 1.11. *The Projectionist*'s Chuck hesitates in front of a grocery store and two black men

Figure 1.12. A reverse shot of Chuck looking warily at the store

Figure 1.13. We cut to Chuck's hallucination of Captain Flash surrounded by The Bat's black-clad henchmen

Such nuances as I have identified in the street scenes are more easily detected in concert with the montage and fantasy sequences, which, cumulatively, 'instruct' us regarding *The Projectionist*'s concern with race. In the context of the dialectic between narrative and attractions explored earlier in the present chapter, the different filmmaking styles deployed within *The Projectionist* are also significant. The street scenes aren't seemingly heavily edited or manipulated inasmuch as the handheld camera seems to follow Chuck at an aloof distance. The political rhetoric governing these shots, though detectible, isn't blatant. The rapid montage sequences present us with the opposite extreme: their bombarding us with images might leave us feeling over-directed and hectored by their rhetoric. These contrasts point to the differing extents to which images are either insidious in their effects or nakedly aggressive.

Chuck's first encounter with a screen outside of his booth is at another movie theatre where *Barbarella* (Roger Vadim, 1968) is playing. The movie, which centres on a forty-first-century astronaut, echoes, in several respects, the episodic Captain Flash story of Chuck's imagination, which seems loosely to parody *Flash Gordon* and likewise stages the battle against an evil tyrant.[72] Chuck briefly joins those gathered to watch black and white images of *Barbarella* shown on a TV screen to passers-by.[73] A sign informs us that *Barbarella* is 'in technicolor', so that one can recognise that the TV screening is

[72] One of *Barbarella*'s characters has invented a 'positronic ray' or weapon that could fall into the wrong hands. The possession of such an invention is what originally makes Captain Flash's scientist vulnerable. Like Flash Gordon, the character Captain Flash seems to parody, the Barbarella character is a multimedia, comic-strip creation.

[73] I have only found, by a highly circuitous route, one reference to the practice of exhibiting clips from movies on TV screens outside of theatres. In Adam Curtis' documentary *HyperNormalisation* (2016) Patti Smith, in reminiscing about New York in the 1970s says, 'Oh, there's a lot of things, like, when you pass by big movie houses, maybe we'll find one, but they have little movie screens, where you can see clips of, like, *Z*, or something like that. People watch it over and over... All day! I've gone back and forth and they're still there watching the credits of a movie, cos they don't have enough dough. But it's some entertainment, you know?'

reductive of the film. Even so, the black and white conforms to the way in which *The Projectionist* deploys monochrome as part of its objectification of images. As a strategy, this invites the consideration of images as images as well as in terms of what they depict.

Chuck is temporarily bracketed with the all-male audience of *Barbarella*'s sidewalk 'screening', many of whom have gathered, no doubt, for a glimpse of Jane Fonda in the nude or of one of the film's scenes in which she has sex. Like *Sherlock Jr.*'s projectionist, Chuck responds to the images by 'projecting' visions of his own over them: the trailer for a film of his own invention, 'The Wonderful World of Tomorrow'. The trailer stylistically imitates those of 1950s' invasion films. It uses, among other clips, excerpts from the adventure serial, *Flash Gordon*, to look forward to 'a golden age of science and progress'. *Barbarella*'s temptress thus sparks alluring images of a techno-utopia promised by scientific progress in Chuck's train of thought. According to his trailer, technology will end war, institute world peace and heal racial and religious divides. The trailer has a counterpart: Chuck's earlier imagination of humankind's destruction as a film named 'The Terrible World of Tomorrow'. In this first trailer, spectacular scenes from *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* (Fred F Sears, 1956) form its basis and show the saucers destroying structures symbolic of American political power such as the Washington Monument and Capitol Building. Science-fiction images are interspersed with what looks like newsreel footage of blinding explosions and mushroom clouds created by the detonation of atomic bombs. Both trailers allude to the consequences attending the development of nuclear weapons and alternative, polarised outcomes.

These filmic pieces of publicity interrogate the way in which images operate as propaganda. The trailer's purpose is wide circulation and projection

on theatrical screens. In other words, it is inherently exhibitory and aggressively present, and, as such, sanctioned by, and reflective of, the powers controlling screens. Its intent is to lure patrons back to the theatre to consume more of the images it promises will be shown. Therefore, the individual visions it projects, and how it organises them to appear to best advantage, reflect the seduction it wants to practise. The second trailer (for 'The Wonderful World of Tomorrow') includes a scene whose promotional intent is obvious: that of a medium close-up of a smiling, crouching Hitler addressing a small, blond boy he holds solicitously at the waist while the accompanying caption reads 'goodness and kindness reign supreme'. The stinging irony of the trailer's deployment of Hitler to depict benevolence parodies the propagandistic use of images since, at face value, the scene does indeed present someone behaving kindly. The repackaging of political propaganda in the form of the trailer – a blunt, blatant instance of rhetoric at work – exposes its crudeness. However, by using irony to illuminate propaganda's attempted assault on critical thought, *The Projectionist*'s trailers furnish the distance the sophisticated reading of images requires.

The sign outside the movie theatre, which states 'Jane Fonda is Barbarella', succinctly describes the star's complex meanings. The semi-pornographic *Barbarella* exploits to the fullest Fonda's status as a sex symbol. Moreover, she symbolises the American heroine:

> … virtually all the American critics of *Barbarella* … insisted on Jane's "normal", "healthy" performance in this "kinky" film, and Pauline Kael in the *New Yorker* spoke of her as "the American girl triumphing by her innocence over a lewd comic-strip world of the future" …[74]

[74] Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1998), p. 67.

Between *The Projectionist*'s shooting in 1968 and its release in 1971, Fonda was evolving from what Susan McLeland calls a 'futuristic sexpot' into a 'political animal'.[75] According to McLeland, in 1970 *Newsweek* called her "The Cause Celeb" and the *New York Times* 'catalog[ed] her activities for the Black Panthers, Native Americans, and the antiwar movement' among other causes, like that of women's liberation.[76] Thus 'Jane Fonda is Barbarella' points to the two images Fonda projects in the late 1960s and early '70s, which seem contradictory or, at least, out of synch with one another. It alludes to how star images, as well as images in general, might be manipulated to yield a variety of, occasionally opposing, meanings.

Women, as with the *Barbarella* example, introduce a number, though not all, of the montage sequences (fig. 1.14). Most notably, the final montage, themed around humankind's capacity to destroy the world, is triggered by a rather dishevelled, gap-toothed older woman, who rants on the topic on a sidewalk as Chuck makes his way to work (fig. 1.16). Chuck patiently stops to listen rather than merely ignoring someone who presents as mentally disturbed. This presents him, once again, as essentially kind, amenable to doom-mongers, or both. A young, blonde, attractive, naked counterpart to this crone-like Cassandra figure causes Chuck to pause when leafing through a magazine in an earlier scene in an adult shop. The photographed woman lies on a rug fashioned from a polar bear skin and is shot from above so she looks up and into the lens from a submissive position. It could be that she is supposed to compensate for the obscured and indistinct close-up of Fonda's face, which is all we see of the movie star. The model, on the other hand, appears to respond

[75] Susan McLeland, 'Barbarella Goes Radical: Hanoi Jane and the American Popular Press', in Adrienne L McLean and David A Cook (eds), *Headline Hollywood: A Century of Film Scandal* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p. 233; p. 236.
[76] Ibid., p. 238.

to Chuck's hesitating over her still image by coming to life; addressing him by questioning whether he isn't 'the nice guy who always finishes last' who should think about '[having] some satisfaction' and 'looking out for number one' (fig. 1.15).

In posing these rhetorical questions the model presents Chuck with an alternative to his impulses to kindness. Once again, a woman purposes to seduce, and many of the clips forming the montage she triggers are of scenes from films in which characters express sentiments similar to hers. The last example in the series is Charles Foster Kane's raising a toast 'to love on my terms' in *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941). From there, the volume of the non-diegetic music rises and plays over the rest of the clips which include some of Kane's cavorting in a dance number in which he is celebrated. In the number itself, as it appears in *Citizen Kane* rather than *The Projectionist*, the subject of Kane's newspaper's manipulation of public opinion regarding the Spanish-American War arises. This once again alludes, as the trailers do, to the dissemination of propaganda. The clips and images, particularly at first, are based around dancing, parties and orgies. These are juxtaposed with those of jackbooted armies marching in formation and footage of Hitler doing a jig.

Hallucination triggers in *The Projectionist* (figs. 1.14-1.16).
Figure 1.14. Watching *Barbarella* triggers a 'trailer'

Figure 1.15. A pornographic magazine is another trigger

Figure 1.16. A crone-like figure triggers another hallucination

The montage is also punctuated with clips of a belly dancer brandishing a bullwhip and of women addressing the camera by pouting or blowing kisses and other titillating and pornographic images. Some of these references to torture are interspersed with candid photo-journalistic images relating to actual violence and suffering, as opposed to pastiche. The sequence thus develops the theme, first mooted in the trailers, of the viewer's being seduced into accepting the necessity of violence in the pursuit of one's ends. The handheld camera follows Chuck around the adult shop with its racks full of magazines, books and its references to films available for viewing. Throughout the movie, the saturation of the environment with images – and the aggression of this in

itself – is observable, and the sense of this is heightened in the adult-shop scene by its association with pornography.

A related side note is that Chuck's perambulation takes him beneath a great number of movie-theatre marquees, of which many display the injunction to 'save free TV'. This refers to a contemporary campaign of that name against cable television taken up by, among others, the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO). It was feared that cable would give home viewers increased access to movies, or even see theatres bypassed altogether with films released directly to TV. Though TV is the exhibitor's traditional adversary, the campaign reflects NATO's pragmatism regarding doing what seemed necessary in aid of the survival of theatrical exhibition.[77] However, the dichotomous complexities of the movie theatres' pro-TV campaigning expose a new terrain of battle for an encroaching capitalism (with the birth of media conglomerates from the old studio system and the concentration of corporate power) and raise questions regarding the supply and control of film; who may screen it and where.[78]

The portrayal of Chuck's TV viewing problematises the small screen and how images circulate and to what ends. It highlights their value in, and use to, a consumer culture in which TV and other media not only vastly increase the consumption of images themselves, but also require the production and

[77] As well as advertising the 'save free TV' campaign on marquees, some NATO members' theatres projected anti-pay TV publicity within the film programme and made petitions available in the lobby for patrons to sign. In the background of this was the Hollywood studios' increasing participation in TV production, of which exhibitors took a dim view. See Deron Overpeck, '"Make Mine a Movie! In a Movie Theater!" (Or on My Pay-TV Service): How America's Theater Owners Learned to Stop Worrying and Accept Cable Television, 1969-1976', *Screening the Past*, (21 October 2013) <http://www.screeningthepast.com/2013/10/%E2%80%9C%E2%80%99make-mine-a-movie-in-a-movie-theater%E2%80%99-or-on-my-pay-tv-service-how-america%E2%80%99s-theater-owners-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-accept-cable-television-1969-1976/>, accessed 23 July 2017.

[78] 'The 1960s and 1970s are among the most important decades in American film history; during this period the attenuated remnants of the studio system began to be transformed into the current conglomerated entertainment industry'. Ibid.

circulation of ever more images to sell goods, promote consumption and consumerist lifestyles. In the sequence in which Chuck watches TV such consumerism is associated with patriotism. In front of his set, he is relieved of projectionist duties and demoted, like everyone else, to a position of passive reception. Yet once again he 'projects' the products of his own imagination over what is broadcast. One of his most disorienting, ridiculous and prolonged hallucinations is introduced by an on-screen priest's utterance of a piety regarding the practising of humility and the challenge this presents to the individual. This prompts Chuck's vision of a televangelist's infomercial.

The televangelist introduces the product he sells, which comprises flesh pinchers, a cat o' nine tails and a set of stocks, as the 'Judeo-Christian good-guy kit'. In thus naming his merchandise, he peddles a religious nationalism that was a pronounced feature of American identity as a so-called Judeo-Christian nation with Judeo-Christian values during the cold war. In this, the US inherently opposed 'godless' communism.[79] At the same time, the ludicrous emphasis the infomercial places on torture and self-abasement subjects the respective religions themselves to ridicule. The implements demonstrated, and the televangelist's spiel, caricature the preceding, and much quieter, homily on humility. Although the infomercial hints that the original priest's broadcast is humbug too, it is interesting that the snippet from his sermon, in describing humility as 'difficult and extremely trying', broadly peddles the good-guy gospel as well. In other words, the infomercial parodies Chuck's own heroic ideals regarding saving others expressed in his Captain Flash fantasies. Moreover, it

[79] See Atalia Omer and Jason A Springs, *Religious Nationalism: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: Abc-clio, 2013), p. 131: 'The Cold War era provided the context for an intensified and increasingly rigid reframing of American identity as uniquely embodying Judeo-Christian values. To emphasize the supposedly profound differences between the United States and the godless, communist Soviet Union, American political elites began to appeal to America's characteristic belief in God'.

mocks the religious and moral basis of American authority in relation to world affairs and pillories its self-conception as the 'good guy'.

The infomercial's complex inferences are thrown into relief by the 'special' gifts offered as well. One of these, the 'Judeo-Christian brotherhood poster', is a large cardboard image with an African-American man depicted on one side and the body of a white man on the other. Parallel with the African-American's head is a cut-out hole through which the poster's owner, who is assumed to be white, can push his face to create a tableau of interracial brotherly love. The white televangelist sells the poster as allowing the expression of friendship with African-Americans that avoids actual interaction with them. As egregious as the poster is, the good-guy kit as a whole is comprised of items associated with coercion, enslavement and therewith the historical exploitation of blacks. Slavery wasn't only unopposed by a significant proportion of people who considered themselves moral, pious and so on, but was consistent with their beliefs. The infomercial's irony (in its candid racism even as it sells an opportunity to express the opposite sentiment) parodies white ambivalence about racial integration, even on the part of nominal supporters of black advancement. It doesn't mock segregationists so much as liberals whose support for blacks belies a wish the status quo be maintained.[80] The infomercial's repeated utterance of 'Judeo-Christian' roots contemporary strife and white supremacy much more deeply: in the US' very foundations. The infomercial's racism is insidious as well as overt. To consider the direct address of the infomercial is to recognise the televangelist's assumption that he

[80] The other special gift offered – a pad containing petitions for 365 worthy causes so that one can sign and mail one off every day of the year – reveals similar contempt for what one might suspect is a climate conducive to posturing.

addresses a white, racist audience. In this it equates 'Judeo-Christian' with white; in effect disenfranchising the rest of the population.

The TV's nightly sign-off routine, which in many regions of the world typically includes movies, infomercials, religious broadcasting and the national anthem, is portrayed as an orgy of religious nationalism culminating in alternative renditions of *The Star-Spangled Banner* and different sets of accompanying images. The sequence blends what is screened on Chuck's TV set with what he imagines. In other words, as he watches TV, an off-camera voice emanating from the set bids viewers goodnight before the national anthem starts. We then cut to two sequential montages. While the first set of images celebrates US history, contemporary life and achievement (for example, by including a clip of the moon landing), the second can only be Chuck's hallucinatory riposte since much of its content is shockingly candid and violent, and therefore implicitly condemnatory of the US' past and politics. The following of what appears to be an ordinary TV closedown with a parodic version of the same, exposes the medium's ordinary, real-world patriotic address and its particular role in inculcating a deeply problematic self-image of the nation. The televangelist's infomercial portrays TV, through its presenter's direct address and sales patter, as an intrusive, overbearing, violent, self-serving bully. The pertinence of *The Projectionist*'s satirising TV, and its questioning of the medium's uses and abuses, is heightened in the context of contemporary campaigning about it.

The montage to which the televangelist directs us following his advertisement, is a string of filmic visions of heaven. The final scene depicts an exclusively African-American celestial host, whose blackness contrasts strikingly with the brilliance of their angelic robes. It is impossible to know

precisely what the scene, which is divorced from the context of the film from which it is excerpted, originally expressed.[81] However, it does recall the 'race movie' (even if it isn't an excerpt of one such), which was produced between the 1910s and early 1950s, and consisted of films featuring all-black casts produced for distribution to black cinemas. These movies reflected the segregation rife in nearly all aspects of American life including in movie theatres where, if they weren't black cinemas, blacks were seated separately from whites. The race film was produced outside the Hollywood studio system. In the context of the TV sequence, too, the scene in question retains ambiguity. It entertains the notion of blacks entering heaven but posits that segregation is maintained even there, unless it implies that, because of their treatment of blacks on earth, or their tolerance of it, whites are unlikely to be admitted to heaven. Furthermore, the anomalous tableau of a black multitude, which follows a series of more stereotypically white ones, confronts us with the issue of African-American representation in general, and on film, specifically. In the trailer for 'The Wonderful World of Tomorrow' its purportedly looking forward to an era of racial harmony is disrupted by a close-up of a man who reveals his blackface when he lowers what looks like a Hebrew newspaper over which his beaming smile and fervent nodding to the camera appears. This offensive image subverts the trailer's ostensible message with a reminder of Hollywood's historical reflection of racism in wider society. It surely refers to Al Jolson's successful films of the 1920s and '30s, such as *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland, 1927), in which his blackface repeatedly features. The shot implicates Jews in perpetuating racist stereotypes, as well as Christians.

[81] To date I haven't identified this clip.

The montages and fantasy sequences are constituted exclusively of black and white images. Apart from allowing us to distinguish Chuck's 'reality', the colour coding functions with regards to *The Projectionist*'s own commentary on a US built on slavery and still living with its legacies. When Chuck looks at actual screens or fantasises a montage, what emerges is a monochrome mindset according to which people are black or white and only see beyond that with difficulty. Narratives like those upon which Captain Flash is based, are black and white in the figurative sense of their overinvestment in the American way as the right way, which is beyond question and creates baddies that can be hurt with impunity. Yet, as I will argue below, Flash's sequences often contain elements that undermine the portrait of the all-American hero. The montages unmask the hypocrisy of these heroic representations by referring to the position of African-Americans, who are still prevented from availing themselves of rights or participating in the American dream.

The most extended set of scenes involving a screen occurs late in the movie. Interestingly, it is an understated iteration of a character's passing through the screen and belongs to the conclusion of the Captain Flash subplot. Having defeated The Bat, Flash sweeps his love interest down the aisle of a palatial movie theatre (an auditorium on a different scale of opulence to the one appearing in the rest of *The Projectionist*) and onto the stage in front of the screen. There, the couple improvise dancing in front of projected sequences from musicals like *Gold Diggers of 1935* (Busby Berkeley, 1935) and *Footlight Parade* (Lloyd Bacon, 1933), both choreographed by Berkeley. However, at one point in the montage they manage, rather matter-of-factly, to 'break through' the screen as scenes of what look like a race of aliens dancing with white-robed women give way to those of Flash and his girlfriend skipping

through a meadow and along a seashore. When they reach a promontory, an abrupt zoom out seems to jolt the montage back to what looks like *Footlight Parade*'s bathing beauties, at which point Flash and his friend approach the image from off camera, re-establishing the screen boundary once more.

The offbeat costumes of Flash and the scientist's daughter, and their ecstatic dance, signal their performance as travesty. Juxtaposing them with Berkeley's lithe, youthful, beautifully formed, be-sequined human fountain spirting water camps up the finale considerably. The protagonists' mimetic interactions with columns of beaming piano-playing showgirls, or their fear when confronted with a swimmer magnified to whale-like proportions by the screened medium close-up, subjects the dance numbers to sardonic glances by intradiegetic viewers in the form of Flash and his girlfriend functioning not wholly dissimilarly to *Uncle Josh*'s rube (fig. 1.17).

Figure 1.17. Flash and the scientist's daughter interact with the screen like 'rubes' in *The Projectionist*

As has been discussed above, previous montages link dance formations and goose-stepping armies, priming us to look askance at the Berkeley apotheoses regardless of the protagonists' light mockery of them. The ostentatiously rigorous coordination of the dance numbers has undertones of

militaristic drilling, as if these uniformly dressed, and shaped, showgirls and swimmers, too, are enlisted by Hollywood in advancing or reinforcing white and American supremacy. In addition, Flash's costume subverts the superhero image throughout with its overzealous flying helmet and goggles, unflattering fit and underpants that require repeated adjustment. Its expression of ambivalence about heroes questions the ideology that calls for such figures.

The Projectionist's being constituted to such a great extent by montage frequently engages us in games of image identification or of speculation about their provenance. Our attention is therefore continually drawn to questions of images' original purpose, context and use. Additionally, as we create meaning from the montages, it is brought to our notice in this, as well, that images can have an inherent utility or currency which isn't necessarily limited by their circumstances of production. In other words, *The Projectionist* interrogates what it means for images to circulate and be distributed on screens; to be exhibited or, in short, used. The screening of some of the images included in the montages, such as newsreel footage of Hitler, are obvious instances of the machinery of propaganda in action. However, even aside from these infamous and obvious examples, any image's screening speaks to its being somehow politically valuable or serviceable.

Questions as to the function and value of images go hand in hand with the aggressive image-saturation of culture. In *The Projectionist*'s terms, therefore, exhibition is as significant or political an act or activity as production. As I will shortly show, certain sequences which allude to *The Projectionist*'s own theatrical exhibition hint that the filmmaker may pre-emptively be resigned to its not being widely screened. Paradoxically, this makes its point about the implications of being exhibited or shown. In short, screened images articulate,

and in some way service, the power structures and ideologies within which they are made. If *The Projectionist* isn't screened, it is perhaps partly because, even on first viewing, one recognises its critical stance towards America beneath the surface slapstick and seemingly innocuous, celebratory façade. At the very least, one isn't always sure, from moment to moment, whose interests the film serves, defends or expresses. The inclusion of Nazi propaganda, for example, is disconcerting. This raises the question of the extent to which Chuck is critical of the images that pervade his consciousness. Is any critical distance inherent in his projecting of them, or does he merely display them so that we might undertake a reading or interpretation?

Projectionist, fanatic and fantasist

As *The Projectionist* draws towards its conclusion, and as its projectionist-protagonist, Chuck, finishes telling Harry an episodic anecdote in the booth, the projector is heard thrumming in the background. We cut from a medium close-up of the friends to a publicity still of Humphrey Bogart, over which the shadow of a moving film reel can be seen, and then to a still from *Sherlock Jr.* in which the boy stands in the projection booth facing the rewind bench, scissors in hand, projectors behind him, gazing up at a shelf of film reels labelled 'feature', 'comedy', 'cartoon', 'news' and 'western' (fig. 1.18).

The image from *Sherlock Jr.*, and that of Bogart, materialise as one of *The Projectionist*'s subplots comes to an end. Chuck's every meeting with Harry has Chuck regale him with developments in his romantic pursuit of a woman. It is depicted in silent black and white scenes as if in flashback. Once Chuck finishes the story, Harry congratulates him and calls him a 'champ'. We then cut to successive shots of Bogart's and *Sherlock Jr.*'s images. When we

return to Chuck he sits in the same attitude as before, but this time he is alone. This might make us wonder whether Harry really was there, since his 'departure' is abrupt and unrepresented. In being the rapt recipient of Chuck's episodic story, one of Harry's functions is to shore up Chuck's projection of himself as a romantic hero, like Bogart, who emerges as a personal idol of Chuck's. The scene's punctuation with the cuts to the photographs provides clues that Chuck's story about the woman is a fantasy. Firstly, Bogart's image hints that the story might be designed to portray Chuck as similarly magnetic to women. Secondly, the quotation of *Sherlock Jr.* hints that the 'flashback' is some sort of dream since Keaton's projectionist is a dreamer. The image from *Sherlock Jr.* depicts the projectionist alone in the booth. I argue below that, just as *Sherlock Jr.*'s boy's imagination generates a dream-film we might label 'Sherlock Jr' from the space of the booth, so *The Projectionist* contains 'The Projectionist', as well as a host of other fantasies within it. Eventually, 'The Projectionist' reveals that the booth defines the limits of Chuck's existence.

Figure 1.18. Frame enlargement from *The Projectionist*: a still image from *Sherlock Jr.* is taped to the wall of the booth

Other scenes give us reason to think that the images taped to the wall of the projection booth point to the construction of Chuck's inner life from movies. It transpires that Chuck's bedsit, too, is festooned with posters of the films of

Laurel and Hardy, the Marx Brothers and WC Fields. Charlie Chaplin features in the montage sequences that seem to be products of Chuck's imagination. Like the image of Keaton, these icons evoke slapstick from the first forty years of cinema. The Captain Flash sequences, in particular, reproduce the aesthetics of silent-era slapstick with black and white images accompanied by music and sound effects but no spoken dialogue. In addition, the acting and performances within them are rather stylised and peppered with pratfalls and other sight gags.

In *Uncle Josh* and *Sherlock Jr.*, the individual's interactions with the screen provide climactic moments in the narrative. One of the subtler ways in which *The Projectionist* references *Sherlock Jr.* is to include differently executed moments of 'screen passage'. Firstly, there are instances such as when Chuck stares at TV monitors outside a New York cinema and in his apartment. In these cases, screens are conduits to his own imaginings as the cinema screen is to the projectionist in *Sherlock Jr.*. On other occasions Captain Flash, or Chuck himself, appears on the screen from a starting position outside of it. As discussed below, these understated 'screen passages' might have slightly different functions and effects but they all express the power and irresistibility of images.

The Projectionist's homage to *Sherlock Jr.* is pertinent in another way. *The Projectionist* itself is a critical evaluation of American culture based on its cinema and conducted in the filmic medium. According to several critics, *Sherlock Jr.* affords the pursuit of related questions (for example, the exploration of spectatorship and of medium specificity). In making *The Projectionist*, Hurwitz doesn't ascribe the political and critical aims of his film to *Sherlock Jr.*, but, rather, recognises that some of the latter's narrative premises

might be deployed in the critique he wants to mount. In this regard he observes the potential in *Sherlock Jr.* that later scholars develop in their writings. As part of this he perhaps recognises, too, that *Sherlock Jr.* aims to provoke audiences by means of attractions rather than to provide them with a straight story in which they might lose themselves. Hurwitz follows suit in producing a film that, in its self-conscious style, challenges Hollywood classical narrative. *The Projectionist* can properly be considered experimental and avant-garde, whereas we might feel it something of an exaggeration to bracket Keaton as formally experimental in the same way or to the same degree, even if the attractions Keaton includes make his film self-conscious as well.

Chuck says of the booth, 'It's my own little world. I live here'. His inhabiting the booth, as opposed to merely working in it, and its constituting a 'world' for him, is borne out by the way in which he continually thinks about movies. It also hints that he never leaves the booth even though we see him do so. As explained below, the interpretation that *The Projectionist*'s own narrative is the booth-bound projectionist's hallucination, is one the film makes available. Chuck's fantasies reveal an inner life shaped and formed by images and scenes from the span of Hollywood history. When interviewed during his fantasy of *The Projectionist*'s premiere, Chuck relates spending 'most of his early life in film houses'. Since his bedsit is lined with movie posters, he sleeps in a space resembling his booth with its portable TV creating an impoverished 'auditorium'.

A bravura scene in terms of performance, in a film generally low on dialogue, shows Chuck impersonating some of the idols depicted on the wall of his booth. These include Bogart's character from *The Caine Mutiny* (Edward Dmytryk, 1954), a speech from pro-Vietnam film *The Green Berets* (Ray Kellogg; John Wayne, 1968), a scene from *The Fighting 69th* (William Keighley,

1940) based upon the exploits of New York City's 69th Infantry Regiment during the first world war and impersonations of Rhett Butler (Clark Gable) and Prissy the house girl (Butterfly McQueen) from *Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939). The sequence illustrates Chuck's penchant for the war film. In an earlier conversation between Chuck and Harry it emerges that Chuck had been a fireman in the army in his past. He recollects escaping other army duties by tending furnaces: a hot, solitary position he compares to the projection booth. He thus expresses an ambivalence towards the military that belies an evident familiarity with, and enjoyment of, on-screen war. The era from which many of the films cited come – that of the 1940s and '50s – corresponds to Chuck's childhood and supports his acknowledgement of the influence of movies as he was growing up. The concentration of such films in this scene also points to cinema's role in mediating war.[82] As well as being a war film, *Gone with the Wind* is *The Projectionist*'s first allusion to the position of US blacks, albeit a historical one. Having re-enacted the scene in which Prissy, one of the household's slaves, reveals, when ordered to help Scarlett deliver Melanie's baby, that she doesn't have any midwifery experience, Chuck brings the exchange to a close rather ungraciously by ordering the Prissy of his imagination to 'suck off'. In so doing does he assume the master's impatience with his panicking, ineffectual slave? Or is his irritation directed at a film that mourns a 'civilization' built on slavery?[83] His ambiguity towards war, inasmuch as he seems to appreciate films on the subject while remaining aloof from

[82] Most of the scenes referenced via Chuck's impersonations are from colour films. It seems the impersonations allow colour movies to 'appear' without disrupting the coding in place in the rest of *The Projectionist* according to which black and white indicates a fantasy and colour locates us in everyday reality.

[83] Malcolm X singles out *Gone with the Wind*'s portrayal of African-Americans as an unpleasant childhood memory when he relates in his autobiography that 'When Butterfly McQueen went into her act … I felt like crawling under the rug'. See: Thomas Doherty, 'Malcolm X: In Print, On Screen', *Biography* 23:1 (Winter 2000), p. 29.

actual military duty if he can, perhaps extends to race as well: that while he is far from outwardly prejudiced, he isn't immune from the racism that underpins the US' very foundation. The set of impersonations described above are performed, ostensibly, for Chuck's pleasure. He betrays no awareness of the implications of his choices of idol, his capacity to 'become' them or the problematic nature of their influence.

During one of the Captain Flash sequences, Chuck's protagonist dresses as a gangster and appears, by means of editing, to enter the diegesis of *Casablanca* and interact with Rick Blaine (Bogart) through matched-on close-ups and facial signals and expressions. Certainly, numerous excerpts of Bogart's films – most prominently *Casablanca*, *Across the Pacific* (John Huston, 1942) and *The Caine Mutiny* – grant the star high visibility within the movie, which is reflected in the way he is favoured by the camera's pausing over his image and that of *Sherlock Jr.* towards the end of the film. They reflect a deep interest in the second world war perpetuated, too, in multiple excerpts from newsreels featuring Hitler, the SS and Mussolini. Chuck's own childhood no doubt coincided with the war, its aftermath and the new chapter in east-west relations opened as a consequence, which would lead, eventually, to Vietnam. However, the three films excerpted portray Bogart in roles in which his characters' loyalties, their stomach for war or capacities as combatants are at issue. *Casablanca* and *Across the Pacific* are set at times when America's entry into the war is still under some sort of negotiation. In other words, the Bogart to which *The Projectionist* refers is far from a gung-ho warrior for the American way of life. In *Casablanca*, which is set at a moment when the US itself is still neutral, Rick, at first, makes his own non-partisan status a principle. Chuck's fleeting reference to having been in the army indicates his having been

personally implicated in the US' defence. Due to the understated mention of his previous service in the military, it isn't clear whether he joined up voluntarily or was, perhaps, drafted for Korea or Vietnam. Chuck's idolisation of Bogart delineates the link between contemporary political conflicts and the second world war and its aftermath. It throws into relief how war often makes reluctant actors of those caught up in events beyond their control and used as pawns in larger power games. There is a sense of Chuck's aspiring to be the Bogart of a Vietnam or cold war generation, reflecting a growth in cynicism about the US' role in global politics.

Chuck's identity as a projectionist who spent much of his childhood in movie theatres explains the range of films, genres and cinematic eras that pervade his fantasies. His being portrayed as having a low resistance to the power of images, in that they repeatedly spark a reverie, is a complex matter. By being privy to his daydreams we are shown what he 'sees' in terms of film images and how – by the power of association – they succeed each other. The fantasies are constituted of montages that are open to, indeed, call for interpretation (though scarcely a critic has accepted the invitation). As a film fanatic, Chuck himself provides the material and the means, but his isn't the critical consciousness that stands back and analyses the nature of the images that assail him. Rather, he is the assailed. Like the intermediary he is, the projectionist is the gateway through which we might perceive the film's critical stance towards cinema and America, though he himself is the conduit rather than the filter. He is, simultaneously, the 'filmmaker' in the way the projectionist in *Sherlock Jr.* is. Like him, he uses extant movies and images to unleash his alternative 'films'.

Chuck's fanaticism about film is reflected in his encyclopaedic mental vault of movies covering not only a range of historical periods but of genres and filmmaking and exhibiting practices. Aside from classic Hollywood, which is well represented, the silent clowns and slapstick, newsreel, B-movies, serials, trailers, TV and commercials all feature prominently. The breadth of filmic material used across the whole reflects the diversity of film cultures within and outside of Hollywood. Yet *The Projectionist* isn't a straightforward celebration of subcultures and the fandoms they stake out. Rather, fandom is interrogated through Chuck and one question concerns the extent to which the fan can be critical. I don't intend to suggest the positions of fan and critic are mutually exclusive. However, it should be conceded that the first object of fanaticism is by no means a critical training. Rather, it surely impedes the practice, development or habit of criticism by seducing young minds into embracing prevailing ideologies along with the heroic figures that provoke such admiration. In Captain Flash the superhero image omits rhetorical devices like a muscular stature, good looks, impressive costume or set of powers. In presenting an alternative figure, Flash reveals the extent to which the normal superhero's façade sells him and the seductive national myths he peddles. On the surface, American movie history is celebrated in its variety in *The Projectionist*. In addition, the picture formed of America's rich film culture emphasises the numerous ways audiences encounter movies rather than how they are produced. In this sense, *The Projectionist* supports my overarching thesis that movies about projectionists are primarily about audiences.

The Projectionist's seeming cinephilia notwithstanding, it also devotes considerable attention to the wider media landscape through its New York settings. As a flaneur, Chuck appears to be subject to an oppressive

proliferation of images. The prominence of *Citizen Kane* in one of his fantasised montages affirms the impression of an environment in which one can hardly escape mediatised images that represent and reinforce politically expedient visions of the world. Though a key montage, in this regard, is triggered in the adult-shop sequences, the TV infomercial and TV-closedown montages seem the clearest iteration of the link between media culture and the promotion of consumerism. Moreover, Chuck doesn't simply consume images but is consumed by them, seeking them out in the city, the adult shop and on TV when he is away from his place of work so that an intensifying loop of supply and demand is fostered. It is implied, through Chuck, that cinema is the cradle and catalyst of this image-saturated culture.

In such an environment, Chuck demonstrates that one can hardly be other than an audience since one's attention is continually solicited by images and one is so indoctrinated by this as to seek them out. As we will see, many of the non-American films in the corpus include representations of collective audiences, even if they aim to comment on their sparsity and dwindling numbers. *The Projectionist* contains few depictions of cinemagoers but, through Chuck's individuated example, suggests that the contemporary media landscape positions us as a de facto audience all the time. In this regard, the projectionist's identification with the audience is total and he is subject to images to the same, if not to a more intense, degree. Chuck's tendency to fantasise is therefore ambiguous in that it showcases, on one hand, a vast and impressive cinematic heritage. On the other, a problematic and troubling side of this emerges in the way modern life is increasingly saturated in images while cinema itself declines in popularity.

'The Projectionist' within *The Projectionist*

Perhaps Chuck's single most important visualisation is that of 'The Projectionist': his fantasy of a movie in which he himself is the star as opposed to his alter egos. However, unlike 'Sherlock Jr.', the film within Keaton's film, 'The Projectionist' is a slippery entity. Its functioning as – and vanishing into – *The Projectionist*'s frame story militates against its being conceived of as another of Chuck's imaginations. Since it isn't black and white like the other fantasies, it has no aesthetic means of making itself visible or distinguishing itself from the frame story on an ongoing basis. Yet there are moments in which it suddenly surfaces to raise questions about what its relationship with *The Projectionist* is. Late in the movie, Chuck's 'screen passage', which I discuss below, serves to distinguish 'The Projectionist' from *The Projectionist* and to crystallise the ways in which the former functions and is significant.

The Projectionist's opening titles, which occur a few minutes in, grant a glimpse of 'The Projectionist', the film's own 'alter ego'. This title sequence is seemingly initiated by Chuck's effecting a changeover between projectors. As he looks through the port to verify the success of this manoeuvre, a long shot of the screen displays a sepia image of an infant bearing the name of a production company. The images and music that follow furnish *The Projectionist*'s titles and we understand Chuck's changeover as an adroit lead into the film's formal self-announcement. This might make us disinclined to register that, in narrative terms, Chuck starts a movie running that is the namesake of, indeed refers to, the one we are watching. In other words, *The Projectionist*'s credits might, at first, conceal their secondary function of signalling 'The Projectionist'. On-screen credits are established as not all they seem from the beginning when *The Projectionist* opens, misleadingly, with the titles of *Gerald McBoing-Boing's*

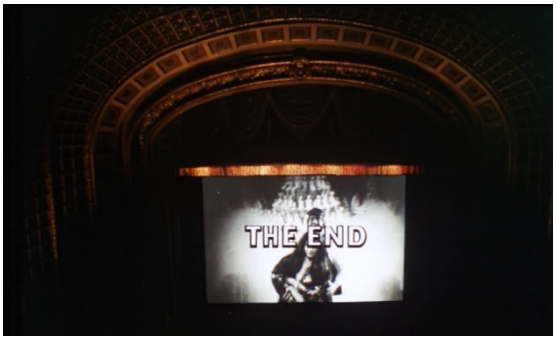
Symphony. In addition, 'The Projectionist' can be argued to have an on-screen end credit which is a counterpart to the opening ones. Only a few minutes before *The Projectionist* ends, the close of the Captain Flash 'serial' is indicated by 'The End' appearing on screen. The remainder of *The Projectionist* then concentrates on Chuck's end-of-screening routine as it unfolds within the booth. It would therefore seem plausible to interpret 'The Projectionist' as marked out or separated from the frame story by credits (figs. 1.19a and 1.19b). However, *The Projectionist* itself begins with the beige block of colour 'describing' the screen on which the *McBoing-Boing* characters appear, and ends with a black frame, which follows Chuck's switching off the projector. In other words, *The Projectionist* comes into being with a beige block and vanishes from view with blackness, which respectively seem to make the screen or film frame appear and disappear (figs. 1.20a and 1.20b).[84] The symmetry of this hints that 'The Projectionist' might overlap completely with *The Projectionist*.

Yet there are more visible, and sometimes jarring, indications of 'The Projectionist'. One such accompanies the first New York exterior. A long shot reveals the frontage of the movie theatre through which Chuck exits having finished his shift. The most prominent element of the mise-en-scène is the brightly lit marquee, which displays 'Now playing / Chuck McCann as *The Projectionist* / Ina Balin / Rodney Dangerfield'. This exposes 'The Projectionist' as a film in the film in a similar but more obvious way than Chuck's screening it inside the diegetic theatre (fig. 1.21). Renaldi mentions the marquee in an earlier scene in which he apprehends Harry visiting Chuck in the booth and issues a punishment that 'tomorrow night, when they change the marquee,

[84] *The Projectionist* thus also begins and ends with white and black frames, which in their subtle way complement its concern with race.

you're gonna stay late and polish every bulb'. He issues this diktat inside the theatre before we see the marquee. Although we don't know it at this stage, in Renaldi's reference to changing the marquee, he anticipates not only the end of the run of 'The Projectionist' in his theatre, but his own annihilation with the conclusion of the film narrative in which he features.

The marquee also imagines *The Projectionist*'s own theatrical exhibition. The forward-projection this shot creates is fulfilled or realised by its actual projection and reception in a cinema, at which point it is no longer a premonition but a depiction of something occurring in real life.



Figures 1.19a and 1.19b. Is 'The Projectionist' marked out from *The Projectionist* by long shots of the screen displaying titles (1.19a) and end credits (1.19b)?

Figures 1.20a and 1.20b. A block of colour (1.20a) and blackness (1.20b) 'describe' the screen and film frame in the first and last shots of *The Projectionist*

Figure 1.21. The revelation of the marquee shows 'The Projectionist', a film in *The Projectionist*

The Projectionist's standing outside of, and looking at, itself manifests in subtler ways as well. The wall of the diegetic booth displays what appears to be Ina Balin's portrait. Like other actors, she plays a dual role as the object of Chuck's romantic and sexual daydreams and as the scientist's daughter in the Captain Flash story. Her photograph can be glimpsed in the background of Harry's first visit to the booth as well (figs. 1.22a and 1.22b). It is fitting and telling that Balin's image is momentarily visible in the scene in which Chuck starts the story about his romance since it hints that it is inspired by the publicity still rather than grounded in a real event. That the woman's scenes are in black and white is another clue about this. Her still image, too, is monochrome so that she never appears in colour. Not appearing in the frame story except as a black and white image suggests she isn't as integral to, or as substantial a part of, Chuck's existence as Harry or Renaldi. However, like the marquee, the booth's accommodation of Balin's photograph admits another element that ruptures the diegesis and objectifies 'The Projectionist'.


Figures 1.22a and 1.22b. Ina Balin's photograph displayed in *The Projectionist*'s booth (1.22a) and behind Harry (1.22b)

Like *Sherlock Jr.*'s, *The Projectionist*'s characters inhabit multiple roles that help to distinguish different subplots while intimating analogous relationships between them. As part of *The Projectionist*'s self-objectifying tendency, it deploys its actors' extra-diegetic personas as well. Balin's publicity headshot depicts a figure – in the form of the star and actor – corralled into the fictions of others, which is how Chuck uses her in more than one of his fantasies. Balin's lending her photographic image echoes the use of what we assume to be images of Chuck McCann's early life in *The Projectionist*'s titles. This title sequence is somewhat incongruous in several respects. Firstly, depictions of what must be the actor in his youth, and in family portraits, interrupt the diegesis as Balin's publicity shot does. The title images thus compound ambiguity over which Chuck – the projectionist character or the actor – is feted. Furthermore, in a film in which the use of images is critiqued via montage, the titles' tableaux of all-American boyhood, their syrupy sepia colour, as well as the slightly melancholy, yearning strings that accompany them shouldn't escape scrutiny. Perhaps the 'album' paints a veneer of innocence over a childhood experienced in the shadow and aftermath of war; that the lost idyll the photographs seem to recall wasn't all it appeared to be. Indeed,

postwar America's values are underpinned by myths and some unpleasant truths as other montages repeatedly show.

Similarly, the improvisational feel of the prolonged exchange between Chuck and Norm, the so-called candy man (Jára Kohout), who plays the scientist in the Captain Flash story, promotes the sense that the past Norm describes might well be an instance, like Balin's and McCann's photographs, of an actor's extra-diegetic existence lending authentic colour to the narrative. This is indeed the case.[85] Moreover, Norm's experiences, Renaldi's hectoring reminiscences about the high standards of the theatre managers 'of yesteryears' and Chuck's own childhood spent in movie theatres, all affirm exhibition's place among film history's objects as far as *The Projectionist* is concerned.

In the New York scenes, Chuck's sighting of a marquee advertising *Star!* (Robert Wise, 1968) heralds his fantasising of 'the world premiere of 'The Projectionist''. Following a montage of black and white footage of arrivals at premieres including those of Judy Garland, Marilyn Monroe and Marlon Brando, Chuck himself emerges from a limousine dressed in a tuxedo. He is hailed as 'Chuck McCann' and the MC's use of the name fleetingly alludes to the actor's attendance of the notional future premiere of *The Projectionist*, which was likely to have been a much lower-key event, if it took place with fanfare of any kind, than the one depicted in the film. Having been interviewed, Chuck takes his

[85] Like Norm, Kohout had been in Czech movies, had owned theatres, had escaped Czechoslovakia during a show attended by communist border guards and had migrated to the US. He mentions acting in silent films and compares the pictures he made in Czechoslovakia to those of Laurel and Hardy in order to give Chuck a frame of reference. His role in the fantasy sequences as Captain Flash's scientist sidekick allow him to reprise this sort of work. A biography of Kohout is available via this page from an online database of Czech film: Jaroslav Lopour, 'Jára Kohout', *Česko-Slovenská filmová databáze*, (2001-18) <https://www.csfd.cz/tvurce/1601-jara-kohout/>, accessed 19 April 2018.

leave of the MC by reason of being required in the booth to project the movie. This reinforces the sense that Chuck only exists in the booth.

As *The Projectionist* draws to a close, and its subplots conclude, apparitions of 'The Projectionist' multiply and become uncanny. The Captain Flash story ends with its couple embracing in front of a movie screen. A cut reveals that this shot is being projected onto the screen of Chuck's movie theatre. What happens next suggests that the disappearance of Captain Flash's black and white images, whose stylised costumes, performances and abstract spaces lend them an opaque quality, exposes the screen's porousness, and Chuck himself, who is watching the end of the Captain Flash movie from the booth, is pulled onto the screen without betraying any sign of alarm or remarking upon it. This 'screen passage' is executed over the course of two shots.

Figures 1.23a and 1.23b. *The Projectionist*'s Chuck passes from the booth (1.23a) to the screen (1.23b)

The first is a low-angle side view of Chuck in the booth in medium close-up, as he watches the finale of Captain Flash through the port window. The second is another long shot of the movie theatre's screen (figs. 1.23a and 1.23b). The cut between Chuck's medium close-up and the long shot is obvious, yet the medium close-up continues on the diegetic screen of the second shot without a break. Chuck gestures as if to rouse himself from his

chair in the medium shot and then the long shot of the screen shows him continuing this action. The sudden and understated way Chuck and his booth appear on screen as he rises has several implications.

Firstly, the booth's on-screen apparition momentarily 'demotes' Chuck's movie-theatre sequences from frame story to film in the film. In other words, though we might think of Captain Flash as contained by, or within, Chuck's movie-theatre sequences, the booth's passage onto the screen gives the lie to this hierarchy and allows a recognition that – regardless of aesthetics and markers of realism – all scenes are fabricated. Secondly, it is another in a series of our expulsions from the film frame as long shots repeatedly re-contextualise the frame as a screen and we are forced then to recognise, as objects, the images in which we have become immersed. Once again this speaks to *The Projectionist*'s self-awareness and its standing back from itself. As with the marquee, Chuck's passage from the booth to the screen also visualises *The Projectionist*'s theatrical projection.

Figure 1.24. A long shot of the diegetic screen shows *The Projectionist*'s Chuck glancing at himself through the port

After this 'screen passage', we then cut from the long shot of the auditorium to the booth once again. Chuck's eyes, expression and body

language are weary and downbeat. He betrays very mild curiosity about his own projected image when he moves towards the port again and cranes his neck to look through. This pause, in which Chuck peers through the viewing port in the closing shots of the movie, is a reminder of the way *Sherlock Jr.* ends. The long shot of the diegetic screen that follows Chuck's glance through the port displays his face at the window (fig. 1.24). The screen therefore yields the reverse shot of the one in which Chuck begins to look. The screen is a mirror at this point, allowing Chuck to meet his own gaze. His expression remains even and neutral during this moment of self-address. I interpret this as the character's tacit recognition of himself as existing as an on-screen figure before his switching off the projector turns the screen black and abruptly ends the film. Yet the look expresses more than his registration of his existing within a film; it is part of *The Projectionist*'s linking a film's exhibition to its ontology. The way in which a film can be felt to exist as such is connected to its being shown and seen. If, seeing himself projected, Chuck becomes aware of his existing as a character in a movie, his turning off the projector is either a suicidal act of resignation that his on-screen lease has expired or an act of faith that he will live again on screen in the future. This ties in to other questions *The Projectionist* raises, as I have argued, about the use and abuse of images and the implications of screening. How an image is distributed, circulated, shown and so on is what determines how it exists.

The final shutdown of the projector that ends *The Projectionist* so abruptly is a sharp pointer to the film's, and Chuck's, solipsism. Every one of *The Projectionist*'s scenes is filtered through Chuck's consciousness, and even when we see Renaldi deliver a military-style dressing down to his ushers, Chuck looks on and distracts Harry by making faces. The very existence of

'The Projectionist' as a film in the film implies that Chuck's consciousness constitutes the diegesis. The proportion of the narrative accounted for by representations of Chuck's interior, his fantasies, inventions and memories, support the notion that *The Projectionist* can be interpreted as the projection of the contents of Chuck's mind. *The Projectionist* points towards a solipsism endemic to an image-saturated culture constituted by the mass production of photographic images, Hollywood, broadcasters, publishing, press and media and required by capitalism, politics and religion. Looked at in this light, it isn't simply that *The Projectionist* isolates itself as an object for consideration and critical interrogation. The film also represents a predicament: the decreasing capacity, in an environment of proliferating images, to see beyond their eloquence or rhetoric and access the truth or reality behind the representation. By implication, the US' sense of its place in the world and its responsibilities is distorted by a failure to imagine the consciousness or point of view of the other. *The Projectionist*'s self-absorption may correspond to the very disease named in one of the early montage sequences when characters from various film excerpts either recommend or condemn selfishness such as when Rick from *Casablanca* intones that, 'I'm the only cause I'm interested in'.

The Projectionist's usual categorisation as a cult film means it has, over time, attracted those who appreciate it against the grain of its failing to garner a mainstream distributor and a wide release in cinemas. Its cult status no doubt reflects the fact that many of the films incorporated within it are, themselves, the kinds of films that attract cult followings, or which would eventually do so, such as *Barbarella* and *It Came from Beneath the Sea* (Robert Gordon, 1955). Although *The Projectionist* slightly pre-dates notions of the cult film as the phenomenon we comprehend today, its film selections speak to the way fan

cultures and cult followings develop. Perhaps fortuitously or instinctively, the film thus references the audience's tastes, as do many of its choices of clip. Although *The Projectionist* doesn't seem, overtly, to take the cinema audience as a subject, there are many ways in which the audience is inscribed.

An important aim of the present analysis has been to recuperate and foreground *The Projectionist* as a work of political and cinematic critique. Other cult films might accidentally betray the political influences in play around them. For example, *It Came from Beneath the Sea* is perhaps symptomatic of the paranoid fantasies promulgated about America's enemies during the cold war. *The Projectionist*, though now classed as a cult film, isn't accidentally political but is, rather, intentionally and flagrantly so. It forms something of a bridge between its earlier forerunners, *Uncle Josh* and *Sherlock Jr.*, and the rest of the corpus which is made up of films representative of different national cinemas. *The Projectionist* conceives of Hollywood and wider American film as a national cinema inasmuch as it continually suggests that American movies are invested in the 'American way' and in promoting it. It suggests that movies themselves are an American medium which is somehow fundamental to the American way of life and its self-perpetuation. It is also highly critical of the foundations and bases of that way of life on the exploitation of African-Americans among others. It sees American religious nationalism, as peddled by the media, as damaging and destructive to the rest of the world as well.

Conclusion

An important source of humour in *Sherlock Jr.* and *The Projectionist* is the projectionist's aspiration to be – and to be seen as – a hero. His mental

projections, in sleep and in waking fantasy, indulge this desire. We witness set-pieces in which Sherlock Jr, 'the crime-crushing criminologist' and the boy's cinematic alter ego, outsmarts his enemies with the flare the dreaming projectionist has proved he lacks. *The Projectionist*'s Chuck goes further by making himself the hero of multiple narratives. He also fantasises that his ordinary existence as a projectionist is enough to promote him as a hero when he imagines *The Projectionist*'s premiere in which he is feted alongside the likes of Brando. Both the projectionist-protagonists of these films imagine being screened and, by logical extension, become movie stars as well as their alter egos. As is established in the introduction to this study, the films with which I am concerned make a figure normally relegated to invisibility highly visible. Whereas in the later two films the projectionist makes himself visible as an on-screen hero, in *Uncle Josh* the projectionist's ultimate revelation is another comic route to visibility.

The projectionist's transforming himself into a hero signals cinema's capacity to obliterate the gap between the real and the ideal. *The Projectionist* contemplates images of heroes, good guys and stars, and how these presentations underpin concepts of the American way of life and belief in its essential benevolence. This extends to America's mission to arrange other parts of the world according to the same principles. Through *The Projectionist* Hollywood emerges as peddling notions of heroes and villains and casting America in the good-guy role. Hollywood movies do this in an unselfconscious style of filmmaking – the classical narrative system – that strives to conceal the rhetoric that drives it.

In *Uncle Josh*, the singularity of the rube is marked not only by his being the sole audience member depicted, but by the outlandish spectatorial conduct

that illustrates his extreme subjectivity and faulty perception. *Uncle Josh* is a very early iteration of the trope of the individual encounter with film or the screen that allows us to explore cinema's representation of, and relationship to, reality. In *Sherlock Jr.* it is once again through the subjective instance – in this case a dream rather than mental debility – that we explore how films might affect spectators and vice versa. *The Projectionist*'s Chuck's reality is constituted by cinema in several respects. As I argue above, his seeming tacitly to recognise or acknowledge, with a glance at himself on-screen, that he is a character in a movie, is one major way in which this is so. These American films all concentrate on the individual encounter with cinema to illustrate its power over the psyche. Through Chuck, *The Projectionist* posits that cinema influences our perception of the world; that Hollywood propagates, influences, or even produces, an American worldview. The influence of cinema and of Hollywood is also expressed by the fact that, in these films, the world of the audience corresponds completely to the spectator's subjective experience of his world and of the films he watches and enters.

In terms of how the present case studies deploy the screen, in *Uncle Josh* it functions both to conceal and to reveal the essential lies that cinema manufactures. The screen's hiding or concealing itself and the other apparatus of cinema, even as it creates illusions, is a source of Josh's ire when he launches his counterattack on the projectionist. As well as prolonging the display of slapstick attractions, the screen in *Sherlock Jr.* raises two facets of cinema's mediation of reality. When the film screened is an inhospitable environment that won't admit the boy's crossing into the world of the movie, we witness cinema's capacity to show us sights impossible in reality; to depict our wildest imaginations. This is also what seems to drive the boy to the screen in

the first place: the invitation it offers to make visible the person one is in one's dreams. Secondly, attractions, which aim to elicit audience response, form part of *Sherlock Jr.*'s strategy to forge a connection with its viewers by showing them something spectacular or that will make them laugh. *The Projectionist*, in drawing attention to its own screening, alludes to the opposite contingency: that it mightn't be exhibited theatrically, be advertised on marquees or enjoy a premiere. In this way, it reflects upon the ontology of the unscreened film. *The Projectionist*'s maker anticipated, and inscribed within the film, a means by which its own lack of a wide audience might be raised as an issue. Yet, paradoxically, its independence from Hollywood and the mainstream is necessary in order that it can express freely its misgivings about the extent to which Hollywood, and the media conglomerates developing out of the studios, influence the national imagination.

Analysis of the films of later chapters of this study, which deal with the disappearance of cinema from the social landscape, will argue that they meditate on what its loss means, particularly in relation to the cultural life of the nation in question. In the case of *The Projectionist*, the anxiety around cinema is more or less reversed. It emerges as having catalysed a cult of images inextricably linked to American self-conception and religious nationalism. Chuck portrays a character whose perception of the world has been formed by Hollywood cinema. The imminent danger isn't, therefore, one of cinema's loss leaving him bereft, but, rather, of Hollywood's legacy becoming increasingly overbearing. As already mentioned, the media conglomerates spawned by the studios, which have interests in TV and publishing too, wield considerable power via their mediation of the country's social and political life.

As we have seen, *The Projectionist*'s self-conscious style – expressed in the rapid montage of film clips, the use of the handheld camera and improvisational performances – distinguishes it from the standard Hollywood production and supplies the distance that facilitates its critique of Hollywood. In *Uncle Josh* and *Sherlock Jr.*, attractions provide self-conscious moments when we might become aware of the kind of film we are engaged in watching rather than lose ourselves in it. By different means and for different reasons, each of the films is somehow at variance with the classical Hollywood style of narrative filmmaking, whether it predates such a style, whether it inserts many gags, stunts and tricks that interrupt it or whether it adopts an experimental style instead. The result is that even the American projectionist-protagonist often exists in some kind of oppositional relation to Hollywood. This is ironic in the cases of the protagonists of *Sherlock Jr.* and *The Projectionist* who, we imagine, are required to be de facto proponents of Hollywood filmmaking in the course of their showing films. It also emerges that attractions and narrative – and the successful negotiation between them – provide competing routes to engaging the audience. As I argue throughout the study, films about projectionists always reveal themselves, through analysis, to be about audiences and how they respond to cinema.

The reflexivity of *Sherlock Jr.* has been discussed at length in film scholarship. The above analysis adds a new dimension to foregoing research; that of how the film conceives of the relationship between films and audiences and how it wants to reach its own audience. In other ways, it transpires that *Uncle Josh* and *The Projectionist* have overlapping concerns about the way films and audiences accommodate one another. The present chapter begins to suggest what might become increasingly clear, it is hoped, as the study

progresses: that the study of the projectionist character adds an important new facet to research on how films are reflexive. Films don't simply behold their own constructed nature, but they inscribe within them their anticipated re-construction in the minds of the audience. Films about projectionists don't simply reflect upon their nature as films, but upon their existence as shown and seen objects. If all films take this aspect of themselves for granted merely by existing, the intradiegetic projectionist's situation and behaviour in relation to films raises it as an often-ignored attribute of the film *qua* film.

Chapter two
Between earth and paradise: projectionists in *The Smallest Show on Earth, Coming Up Roses* and *Cinema Paradiso*

This chapter examines the Italian drama *Cinema Paradiso* (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*) (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988). It is, as far as many are concerned, the preeminent film about the projectionist. Indeed, it doubles the usual number of projectionist-protagonists in having two. It has several features in common with a pair of British comedies, *The Smallest Show on Earth* (Basil Dearden, 1957) and a lesser known example of a film about a projectionist, the Welsh-language comedy *Coming Up Roses* (*Rhosyn a Rhith*) (Stephen Bayly, 1986). Thematically, all are linked by plots in which picture houses close and give way to car parks. Moreover, they take their national cinemas as subject matter insofar as they depict film-exhibition and cinemagoing practices in particular spaces and times. Across the three, the projectionist, projection booth, other cinema personnel and audience members are key elements in the formation of a national or regional background which emerges as significant.

The latter case studies are two of three theatrically-released British films (known to the present scholar) which are set around cinemas and feature projectionists as central protagonists.[1] While *Coming Up Roses* was being made, its director was alerted to the similarities his film bore to *The Smallest*

[1] The third British film of the kind, which is based in a multiplex, is 2014's *The Last Showing* (Phil Hawkins). Making its home-entertainment debut a week after its premiere at London's FrightFest festival in August 2014 and a very brief theatrical release, it is a low-budget thriller starring Robert Englund as a projectionist who deals with the trauma of the switch from celluloid to digital projection by trapping a young couple in the cinema where he is employed and forcing them to act in a horror movie of his devising. See p. 26 for a fuller explanation of why *The Last Showing* isn't included in my corpus.

Show on Earth in terms of story. He then screened *The Smallest Show on Earth* for *Coming Up Roses*' cast and crew.[2] The Welsh film and its forerunner are therefore in dialogue with each other on conscious and unconscious levels.

Given their relationships to national cinema, it is unsurprising that scholarship tends to deal with this chapter's films in that connection rather than as reflexive films. Yet, as I hope to show, filmic reflexivity can encompass the contexts within which films are made and exhibited. The concept of how a film reflects upon itself or upon cinema is enriched and extended by elements such as the films depicted as being screened within the frame film, the frame films' portrayal of film distribution and local conditions of exhibition and the situations of picture houses and their audiences in particular historical, social and political cultures. Furthermore, in *Cinema Paradiso* and *Coming Up Roses* in particular, practices like cinemagoing and home viewing are explicitly linked to the social, economic and political conditions surrounding the depicted cinemas. In *The Smallest Show on Earth* the changing nature of audiences is acknowledged. The effect of TV upon cinema is likewise fleetingly referenced. Connections to the postwar political climate, and its role in these changes, may be inferred but aren't stated. The situation and circumstances of the diegetic picture house nonetheless allude to cinema's role in society. In the present chapter and throughout I juxtapose movies that wouldn't usually be explored in proximity to one another because of their various national origins. I argue that iterations of the social impact of cinema per se emerge through, and accumulate across, a range of examples that pertain to different places and times.

The films in this chapter aren't as dispersed as those of the previous one in terms of the eras they represent. The greater part of *Cinema Paradiso* is

[2] Peter Quince, 'Double Takes', *Sight and Sound* 55:3 (Summer 1986), p. 177.

constituted of an adult projectionist's flashback to his 1940s and '50s boyhood and adolescence. This coincides with the emergence of TV as a mass medium. During the portion of *Cinema Paradiso* set in contemporary times, its cinema closes. This is partly attributed by a character to the popularity of video. *The Smallest Show on Earth* is set in the late 1950s, when British cinema was registering the effects of the take-up of TV. *Coming Up Roses*, which was made a couple of years before *Cinema Paradiso*, refers on more than one occasion to video as cinema's rival. *Cinema Paradiso*'s timespan thus overlaps somewhat with those of the British films. The privileging of the 1950s and '80s across the three corresponds to different points in the encroachment of the home viewing of films on cinema's territory; first from TV and then video.

The projectionist is the solitary or principal example of the film viewer in the American films of the previous chapter. Those upon which I concentrate here relate the encounter of the collective audience with cinema. These strongly present and participative audiences form part of the represented contexts within which exhibition is depicted. They facilitate the investigation of the place or situation of cinema within society and culture. Their reception of film highlights the projectionist's own relationship to it. What distinguishes the projectionist's spectatorship from that of the audience in the auditorium? To what extent does the projectionist view film in the same way as they do? To what extent might he influence or interfere with the ways in which they watch or respond to the films they are shown?[3] What roles does he play in what is shown and how? What are the dynamics between where the films come from and where they are exhibited? To what extent does what is depicted happening

[3] N. 1 of the introduction explains my use of the male pronoun with regards to the projectionist in cinema.

in the auditorium or upon the diegetic screen reflect life outside of the theatre and the relationships of those localities to the wider world? To what extent does the apparatus itself – not just the projectionist and audience but the booth and its equipment – reflect the context in which exhibition takes place? How do films circulate within specific regional or national spaces and between exhibition sites and how does this exhibition apparatus overlay or map onto societal or political structures?

Apart from *The Projectionist* in the previous chapter, the case studies in this one contain a far greater number of discrete screenings of films in the film than the remainder of the corpus. *Cinema Paradiso* is particularly prolific in the number of films it quotes, yet no one has so far attempted to think through the different ways in which its films in the film might function. My objective isn't to carry out an analysis of this for its own sake. Rather, I argue that the films in all the films of this chapter have been created, selected or excerpted for specific purposes which have to do with the frame film's portrayal of the world of the audience. I also want to argue that there are ways in which this works in reverse so that the site and context of exhibition seem in some way to transform, transfigure or act upon the films depicted within them. Moreover, I want to highlight the ways in which the collective audience's reception of the films in the film pertain to the discussion initiated in the previous chapter about the political implications of screening and viewing films.

Two minor case studies will form occasional points of comparison with those named above. *Splendor* (Ettore Scola, 1989) is an Italian film about the decline and closure of a small-town cinema released around the same time as *Cinema Paradiso*. It starts with Jordan (Marcello Mastroianni), the main character, as a child who travels with his father's mobile cinema. It is

constituted of many flashback sequences as is *Cinema Paradiso*. Like the latter's narrative, part of *Splendor*'s is set in contemporary times. *Splendor* begins in the present day by depicting the removal of objects and fittings from the Splendor cinema because it is planned that it will be converted into a department store. It is a secondary case study against which we might compare *Cinema Paradiso* because of the overlaps between their narratives, settings and themes.

A Useful Life (*La vida útil*) (Federico Veiroj, 2010) is set around the Cinemateca. This is an arthouse cinema located in Montevideo in Uruguay, which closes down in the film's story. The main character, Jorge (Jorge Jellinek), isn't a projectionist as such, though he is the one we see in the projection booth projecting a movie. It is the nature of his involvement with the Cinemateca, and the way he comes to terms with its loss, that form the narrative. One or two scenes in *A Useful Life* are especially pertinent as far as the present chapter is concerned. For example, Jorge intones into a microphone attached to an audio cassette recorder, 'You need the Cinemateca. Cinemateca needs you'. This phrase is part of his recording an announcement which, in a later scene, is played back in the auditorium. Its aim is to encourage patrons to subscribe to membership of the Cinemateca. Insofar as *A Useful Life* depicts its dying days and closure it might be felt more appropriate to include it in chapter three. However, it also belongs here due to the ineffectuality of Jorge and his manager's efforts to rescue their cinema, which is a narrative theme of this chapter's films. Furthermore, Jorge's reference to the reciprocal needs of filmgoer and cinema posits the two-way relationship between collective audience and screen in evidence in the films dealt with in this section in particular.

Exhibition as ‘turf war’ in *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Coming Up Roses*

The Smallest Show on Earth relates the story of a young, middle-class couple, Matt (Bill Travers) and Jean Spenser (Virginia McKenna), who inherit a so-called fleapit cinema along with the three eccentrics who work there, including projectionist Mr Quill (Peter Sellers). According to the couple's solicitor (Leslie Phillips), Hardcastle (Francis De Wolff), the owner of the town's much bigger cinema, the Grand, had offered to buy the Bijou from Matt's great uncle for £5,000 in order to build a car park. Much of the narrative concerns Hardcastle's trying to force the couple to accept a much lower price and their counter-attempts to persuade him to raise it. As part of this, the couple reopens the Bijou and shows films once again. Eventually, after a series of triumphs and mishaps at the Bijou, many of them involving Quill's faulty projection and his alcoholism, the couple almost concedes defeat. However, the Bijou’s commissionaire, Old Tom (Bernard Miles), burns the Grand down. Hardcastle is forced to pay the couple £10,000 for the Bijou in order to stay in business while his cinema is being rebuilt. The couple also elicits a promise that the three staff can stay on as employees in the interim. Just as Matt and Jean are leaving on the train, Old Tom implies he committed arson. Though the couple is perturbed by this, they elect to ignore it and to proceed to their holiday in Samarkand as planned.

An important component of the world of the audience in this film is the setting of the Bijou ‘kinema’ in a town called Sloughborough. The town is introduced, with the couple’s arrival by train, as exuding an off-putting smell from its glue plant. As a caricature of a factory town, Sloughborough’s geographical location is made imprecise despite the prominence of the railway

that serves it. Characters like Quill, Old Tom, Hardcastle, Marlene, the ice-cream girl (June Cunningham) and her father (Sidney James) betray their lower-class status in a variety of regional accents that mix northern (Old Tom and Hardcastle) and southern (Quill and the rest). A preponderance of gentlepersons who have had the misfortune to be relegated to the industrial backwater (including the couple themselves, their solicitor, the imperious Mrs Fazackalee (Margaret Rutherford) and the couple's deceased relative, Great Uncle Simon), serve to emphasise, by contrast, the working-classness of the general population. The social and economic marginalisation of its citizens is thus Sloughborough's defining feature.

The Bijou is a second-tier independent cinema, which shows B-pictures. It receives the newsreel after its rival, the Grand, has shown it, which is a state of affairs Hardcastle is able to exploit to sabotage the Bijou's struggle to become profitable. On its re-opening the Bijou's first patron is a ragged, dirty-faced, snotty-nosed child. Later the audience is composed of teens, teddy boys, farmers and maiden aunts. The loutish teddy boys, and their boorish treatment of Marlene, compound the audience's portrayal as unruly, as does the way the audience as a collective reacts by, for example, lobbing missiles at Matt and at the screen when anything interferes with the film. The audience's rowdy behaviour has a precedent in that of Great Uncle Simon, the Bijou's notorious recently deceased owner, who is spoken of in ways which emphasise his drunkenness, licentiousness and the irregular business practices which see him allowing patrons to pay their entrance in kind with groceries and so on. Quill's and Fazackalee's initial hostilities, during which they each attempt to enlist Matt in saying 'rude and unpleasant' things to the other, is consistent with a general querulousness that pervades the cinema. *Smallest*'s story reaches a resolution

when Old Tom burns the Grand to the ground, which is the definitive expression of the prevailing hooliganism. The nature and relationships of the Bijou's personnel, audience and the wider town all serve a sense of both the cinema's and the town's obscurity.

Projectionist Quill perpetuates the chaos. Firstly, his alcoholism is shown to disrupt a screening. Secondly, he is frequently out of sympathy with his projection equipment. The antiquated machinery, about which he vociferously complains, appears to behave in an antagonistic fashion.[4] Matt, who attempts to take control of it when Quill goes missing, is similarly spited. On entering the projection box during the couple's initial tour of the Bijou, Matt's enquiry as to whether the projectors work is answered by a lamp house shedding one of its sides in comical negation and in response to his light touch. The machinery's treachery is also in evidence when the lever that operates the house lights administers painful shocks to Quill and to Matt in turn. In other words, Quill embodies, through both his drinking and the apparatus he describes as 'my equipment', the disorderly spirit of the site of exhibition.

As will emerge in the present analysis, Quill is a vital part of the apparatus that sets the film before an audience. Accordingly, he is in the vanguard of the turf war between the Bijou and the Grand and is quickly identified as a target when Hardcastle and his cabal plot against their rivals by means of placing a bottle of whisky in the newsreel. Quill is, in a negative sense, an intradiegetic 'filmmaker'; the perpetrator of an accidental iconoclasm

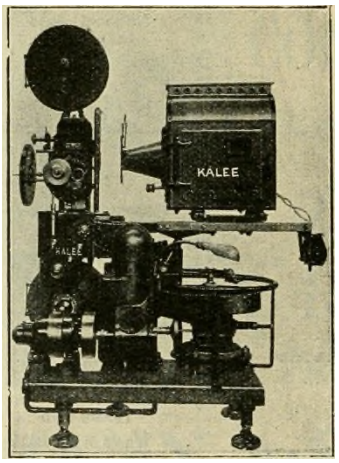
[4] Quill's complaints about the projectors are supported by their antiquated appearance. We can hazard that the pair with which he battles date back to the era in which silent cinema was giving way to sound since their shutter blades are positioned in front of the lens. Such a placement was more common in early projectors. Leo Enticknap tells us that, 'By the early 1930s, the majority of projector designs positioned the shutter between the mechanism and the light source …' in *Moving Image Technology: From Zoetrope to Digital* (London; New York: Wallflower, 2005), p. 139, fig. 5.3).

which means no film is presented smoothly or uneventfully. His stuttering projection makes the screen an expressive window on his own struggle to control his alcoholism, on the Bijou's internal and external strife and on a wider exhibition industry 'hit', as Hardcastle says, 'by TV'. Somewhat perversely, the audience appear to enjoy disturbances created by projection failures or the noise and vibrations of passing outside trains as if they were special effects. The oblique suggestion made by this disregard for good projection – or celebration of bad exhibition – is that neither the films nor the audience for whom they are screened merits the kind of slick presentation we see supplied at the Grand in a brief scene when the couple visits to do some 'homework' regarding professional exhibition. Quill's incompetence correlates to the inferior status of both the B-pictures screened at the Bijou and the audience the establishment attracts. In this way, his troubled mediation between film and viewer is shown to be coherent.

Conversely, no malfunction on the part of Quill's normally temperamental projectors disturbs the peaceful showing of the silent film he runs after hours, *Comin' Thro the Rye* (Cecil M Hepworth, 1923). This diegetic screening yields a moment of pathos which contrasts with the pandemonium that attends normal film shows. Fazackalee's wistful, melancholy piano melody, the emotional leave-taking in bucolic surroundings of the on-screen lovers and the entranced gazes of Quill and Old Tom, as they watch, create an ideal exhibition scenario and evoke cinema's heyday. The film, projectionist, projectors and audience are in harmony, just as they are in disarray when the 'desert pictures' are screened. With the silent film, the equipment is seemingly appeased by its running of a film made closer to its own era,[5] the images of which grace the

[5] See n. 4 above.

screen and command a more contemplative stance than the westerns. It is thus suggested that the film being screened plays an instrumental role in the standard of exhibition which accompanies it, and it is intimated that there is a link between the quality of films and the cinema's declining fortunes. It is further hinted that Quill's projection problems, and perhaps his alcoholism, too, passively protest against the pictures he and his equipment are compelled to run. Quill's mediatory role between film and audience is therefore also consistent with *Smallest*'s portrait of their mutual decline.



Figures 2.1a, 2.1b and 2.1c. The two projectors pictured above (2.1b and 2.1c) are from Kalee and appear to correspond to those in *The Smallest Show on Earth* (2.1a)

Despite the majority of 'desert' or American pictures shown at the Bijou, British cinema is a pertinent issue in *Smallest*. Quill's running *Comin' Thro the*

Rye sees the sole instance of a British production screened. The Leeds-manufactured Kalee projectors (figs. 2.1a, 2.1b and 2.1c) that occupy Quill's projection box are exceptionally cooperative during this screening. We might ascribe this, anthropomorphically, to patriotism. An illustration from *The Kinematograph Year* suggests that Quill's projectors might have dated from as early as 1930 (fig. 2.1c).[6] The exhibition of Hepworth's film sees the westerns banished and Britain momentarily regaining the cinematic 'territory' of the screen. Quill is the principal architect of this temporary British 'reoccupation'. That the scenes screened within the diegesis make a feature of land, in the form of the fields of rye, creates another comparison between the bucolic native landscape where a loving couple parts reluctantly and the scorching, barren and thirst-making American deserts where cowboys and Indians make war rather than love. With *Comin' Thro the Rye*, the brief expulsion of American cinema can be considered in relation to the turf war between the Bijou and the Grand.

This turf war sees *Smallest* adopt the 'typical Ealing comedy plot' in which a small operation is pitted against a much larger rival.[7] Indeed, several former Ealing regulars are responsible for *Smallest* including producer Michael Relph and director Basil Dearden. Charles Barr comments that the film is the nearest one comes to replicating Ealing comedy beyond the Ealing studio.[8] In other words, *Smallest* itself deploys a distinctly British formula as the basis for the story while referring to American cinema in ambiguous ways.[9] A contemporary review sees it as 'Hilarious comment on the plight of the small

---

[6] Anon., *The Kinematograph Year* (London, Kinematograph Publications Ltd, 1930), p. 8.
[7] Charles Barr, *Ealing Studios* (London: Studio Vista, 1993), p. 5. An example such a film is *The Titfield Thunderbolt* (Charles Crichton, 1953).
[8] Ibid., p. 165.
[9] An example of a slightly disparaging reference to American cinema occurs when one of Hardcastle's cronies seems to refer to *On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954) in telling him that, 'In my opinion we'd do ourselves a bit of good if we showed a few desert pictures instead of all this kick-in-the-belly, dump-'em-over-the-waterfront stuff'.

exhibitor'.[10] It stages a turf war between cinemas which includes notions of how much land the picture house occupies and its location in relation to other property and the railway. Indeed, questions of land and assets are pressing from the first as the film opens with the mystery of the size of the fortune the couple has inherited from Great Uncle Simon and what form the bequest will take. In other words, the film creates a fictional townscape and rival exhibitors to reflect not just upon cinema as an entertainment medium but upon the state of British production and exhibition specifically. As projectionist, Quill is at the heart of this reflection as he is the point of intersection between the films screened, the performance of the machinery and the reaction of the audience.

Cinema's relationship to territory is also a prominent theme in the Welsh-language film *Coming Up Roses*, which is also about a closing cinema slated, initially, as the Bijou is, for conversion into a car park. *Roses* was commissioned, for television, by Welsh fourth channel S4C. Its dialogue is almost entirely Welsh, apart from one or two brief scenes that incorporate English characters.[11] As Steve Blandford observes, S4C's establishment in the early 1980s is 'often cited as one of the few times that Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government capitulated to popular pressure'[12] and therefore its language does, in itself, characterise *Roses* as a work of political opposition. *Roses* also represents a landmark for Welsh-language film, attracting cinema

[10] The review from the issue of *The Cinema* from 27 March 1957 is quoted (without a page number given) in J Chapman, 'Films and Flea-pits: *The Smallest Show on Earth*', in A Burton, T O'Sullivan and P Wells (eds), *Liberal Directions: Basil Dearden and Postwar British Film Culture* (Trowbridge: Flicks, 1997), p. 200.

[11] I use *Roses*' English subtitles when quoting dialogue, and have used an off-air recording of the film broadcast on Channel 4 on the evening of Saturday 17 September 1988. It was the first of a three-part season of Welsh features. All had been commissioned by S4C as TV movies and included Peter Jefferies' *Child of Love* (1988) and another film by Bayly made immediately before *Roses*, *The Works* (1984).

[12] Steve Blandford, *Film, Drama and the Break-Up of Britain* (Bristol, UK; Chicago, USA: Intellect, 2007), p. 87.

distribution at film festivals and opening in the West End.[13] It was a TV movie for which S4C initially had no aspirations regarding theatrical release. It was filmed on 16mm stock and blown up to 35mm afterwards for its unexpected big-screen outings.

Almost thirty years on from *Smallest*, *Roses*, which was in development during the 1984-5 miners' strike, portrays the closure of a Welsh town's only remaining cinema, the Rex, which is a picture palace approximating the size of Hardcastle's establishment in *Smallest*. Shortly after the Rex closes, and after its manager, Mr Davies (WJ Phillips), has lent redundant projectionist Trevor (Dafydd Hywel) money he had earmarked for his funeral, he becomes ill and is in danger of dying before Trevor can repay him. Eventually, Mona (Iola Gregory), the ice cream vendor who has also been made redundant, stumbles upon a way to make money that involves exploiting the abandoned picture palace: the mass cultivation of mushrooms in its vast, dark auditorium. Despite the ultimate failure of this scheme, the community makes enough money to pay for Davies' funeral and headstone.

News of the Rex's closure isn't only a crisis for the projectionist, Trevor, but also for his landlord, who explains that he bought the café where they both lodge, which is opposite the Rex, on the basis that it occupied a 'prime site'. Another occupant of the same 'prime site' is a shop called Valley Video situated on the opposite side of the street from the Rex. As well as thus being positioned as the Rex's rival, video is also implicated in the issue of property when, in another scene, a Radio Rentals van briefly appears to repossess a video recorder. The cinema's expulsion from the civic centre reflects a

[13] Dave Berry has neatly summarised most of the firsts *Roses* achieved for Welsh-language film in *Wales and Cinema: The First Hundred Years* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994), p. 329.

declining recognition of it as one of the institutions requisite to a town's identity. It is Mona who questions this in appalled tones when she demands to know 'what are they going to close next – the town hall?'.

Frame enlargements from *Coming Up Roses* (figs. 2.2-2.5).
Figure 2.2. 'Raiders' is advertised as coming soon to the Rex

Roses alludes more than once to the devastation created by the closure of coal pits in south Wales. Following the loss of mining, the initiative whereby the Rex's auditorium is redeployed as a mushroom farm represents an alternative way in which local property might be exploited. Moreover, it introduces mining paraphernalia – helmets and lamps – to the auditorium. In doing so it draws an explicit parallel between pit closures and the decline of cinemagoing, and shows how the remains of each might be repurposed. As increasing numbers of the protagonists' acquaintances become involved in growing mushrooms, the auditorium becomes a 'mine' of sorts, and their operation eventually employs a legion of locals. The townspeople's collective action is carefully distinguished from the dealings of the Rex's parent company, who put it up for sale, and those of its prospective buyers. The latter are a visiting English party overheard referring to its 'site value' and what its art deco

features might fetch ‘piecemeal’. In adopting a democratic mode of doing business, the mushroom cooperative subverts and comments on the way wider prevailing conditions favour ‘Raiders’, which is the title of the film advertised outside the Rex as ‘coming soon’ (fig. 2.2). In other words, under Trevor’s guardianship (as he is employed as the Rex’s security guard after redundancy as projectionist), the auditorium begins to occupy a political space that perhaps replaces or renews what was once the domain of the recently closed coal pits. This state of affairs makes an argument for cinema as a means of asserting political resistance and identity.


Figures 2.3a and 2.3b. Trevor shows the auditorium off with a light show

In *Roses* the Rex’s auditorium becomes the venue for activities other than the showing or watching of film. The mushroom farm is the apotheosis of the ways in which the space is transformed under Trevor’s custodianship. His appreciation of it is first enacted during an idle spell in the closed cinema when he creates a spectacular *son et lumière* show in which, from the projection box, he lights up the auditorium in different combinations of colours. This highlights the auditorium’s mouldings and ornaments, temporarily illuminating the art deco architectural features that are otherwise shrouded in darkness. He accompanies the lights with stage-show fanfare music, as if showing the space off (figs. 2.3a and 2.3b). In another scene during which he and Mona clean the auditorium in preparation for the arrival of prospective buyers, Trevor plays a

recording of Rosalind Russell's rendition of *Everything's Coming Up Roses* from the film musical *Gypsy* (Mervyn LeRoy, 1962) as Mona dusts the stage. She responds to his shining a spotlight on her by miming to the track and gradually unleashing the kind of 'impromptu' dance performance that characterises the musical. The Rex's scarlet curtains provide the backdrop as Trevor looks on, smitten, through the projection box's viewing port (fig. 2.4a). The final shot of the dance number holds Mona in medium close-up as if through a soft-focus lens and in diffuse lighting. Suddenly her duster is a bouquet, her make-up is stronger and her hair set in 1940s' 'victory rolls' and adorned with earrings (fig. 2.4b). Thus, Trevor's interventions reinject the glamour, beauty and romance of Hollywood's golden age into the space: the audience in attendance at the Rex when the news of its closure is broken is constituted of pensioners and schoolboys rather than courting couples. Trevor and Mona reclaim it as a courtship site. At the same time, Trevor allows the Rex to continue to be a destination and refuge for the senior citizens seeking company away from their residential home and for a local punk band who want rehearsal space and who keep the older contingent entertained. As a result, the 'audience' becomes increasingly visible and important as a set of characters of diverse ages and walks of life. As the mushroom farm gathers momentum, individuals and groups become more interested, and their belief in their capacity to contribute grows along with the mushrooms. The auditorium becomes a sphere of community cohesion and, by extension, a political space which exists under the radar of, and in defiance of, the authorities.


Figures 2.4a and 2.4b. Trevor and Mona reclaim the Rex as a courtship site

The persistence of cinema in *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Coming Up Roses*

The British films nonetheless each sound an ambivalent note regarding the persistence, or future, of cinema and cinemagoing. In *Smallest* all the characters – apart from Hardcastle – secure a satisfactory settlement from the Bijou's sale. As the staff assemble at the railway station to take their leave of one another, they look forward to a materially more comfortable retirement from the 'kinema'. Quill is compensated for his imminent obsolescence as a projectionist with the acquisition of Fazackalee as his wife, who, in a subtle inside joke, seems to have been named after the projectors that give Quill trouble.[14] Despite this ostensibly happy ending, the Bijou itself falls into Hardcastle's hands as he planned all along, and is still destined to become the car park he desires for his car-owning patrons. Its temporary reprieve from demolition while the Grand is rebuilt after the arson attack is understood to do little more than postpone its effacement from the town's landscape. *Smallest* ends as Ealing comedies do, with a plucky gang of eccentrics overcoming the soulless capitalist. However, there is little comfort or hope for the independent exhibitor to be found in the film. In the final analysis, the Bijou's value lies in the

[14] The unusual spelling of Fazackalee (instead of Fazakerley) could well allude to the projectors used in *Smallest*, which were manufactured by Kalee. See pp. 164-5.

material security its sale is able to provide for its personnel including those who have spent the entirety of their working lives there. That the Bijou's audience might be disenfranchised by its loss isn't a consideration. Victory lies in the eccentrics' assertion of their right to a share in the spoils of the capitalist's conquest of the space. They merely make a dent in Hardcastle's triumph. Quill's marriage to Fazackalee, as well as the middle-class couple's fulfilment of their ambition to travel to Samarkand, create a happy ending which attempts to mitigate or ameliorate the 'eviction' of the small exhibitor.

Roses has a similarly ambiguous ending, which is an adjunct to the plotline which concludes with the failure of the mushroom crop. The scene depicts the cooperative offering the spoiled, mouldy mushrooms for sale as enriched compost. An aerial shot reveals Mona and Trevor in the thick of a crowd of customers and colleagues eagerly hefting bin-bags full of product. The tray of ices Mona carries, whose contents she yells at the melee, refers to her former cinema role, but its repurposing speaks of resilience and enterprise (fig. 2.5a). Whether the primary colours worn by most of the characters in the scene are the cooperative's new livery or express a pervasive determination to make the best of things, they help depict a cheerful hub of activity in spite of their plans having gone awry and an uncertain future. This scene also reconfirms that Trevor and Mona's post-Rex romantic partnership ignited the community's fight against the effects of the loss of mining. It reminds us that the divorced, lonely and redundant projectionist has been compensated for his losses with a new partner.

Figures 2.5a and 2.5b. The compost sale yields a cheerful cinema-inflected ending (2.5a), while the headstone (2.5b) alludes to the end of cinema

However, the Rex's future is inconclusive and we aren't left with the strong sense that it is saved. On one hand, a councillor hints, in a non-committal way, at the possibility of its eleventh-hour reprieve from the bulldozers. On the other, the shot that accompanies the end credits sounds a pessimistic note as far as the cinema is concerned, even if it confirms that the cooperative has achieved its immediate goal to raise enough cash from the compost sale to secure the cinema manager's headstone. This final shot is a close-up on the headstone. The camera then tracks back and reveals the grave in all its glory; fashioned like a cinema screen flanked by curtains with 'the end' emblazoned across it (fig. 2.5b). It commemorates the Rex's manager but can also be viewed as marking the end of cinema itself and as suggesting that the Rex is unlikely to be rescued after all. Since the fate of the Rex is unclear at the end of *Roses*, the headstone may be its last vestige. Thus the mobilisation to save the Rex becomes a race against time to erect a monument to it. The monument re-locates 'the Rex' from the centre of town to the much contracted space of a cemetery plot. The final scene featuring the Rex itself shows its auditorium crammed with street and traffic signage, suggesting that the council – who moots a last-minute U-turn on their demolition plan as described above – has requisitioned it as a warehouse for their highways department. It is an irony

that one of the town's landmarks is subsequently used to house the by-products of traffic's encroachment, a pressure which is also, presumably, at the root of the car-park plan.

The film in the film in *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Coming Up Roses*

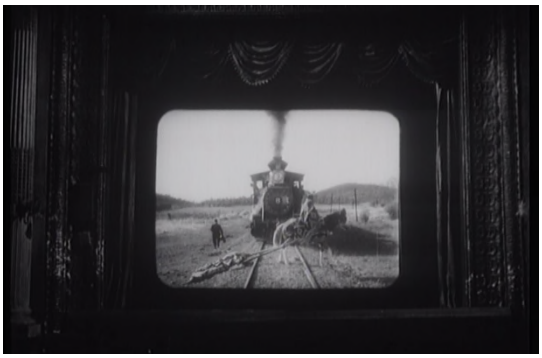
In each of the British films the battles central to the narrative are mirrored in the films screened within them. The Bijou is temporarily successful as a going concern as a result of the 'desert pictures' it shows. 'Excerpts' of these that appear on the Bijou's screen were originated for *Smallest* and don't refer to works existing outside of it. They are titled 'Killer Riders of Wyoming', 'Devil Riders of Parched Point' and 'The Mystery of Hell Valley'. These titles alone intimate that the films are formulaic and of a piece with one another. Though they depict battles between European cowboy settlers and native Americans, which are foreign and historical in subject matter, there are several ways in which the diegesis of the film in the film is thematically continuous with that of *Smallest* itself.

Firstly, their nature as imitative and derivative indicates that they are low-budget B-pictures. As such, they are staples of a cinematic offering that caters to Sloughborough's economically and socially marginalised. The Bijou's continued acceptance of payment in kind is further indication that its low-budget films target a clientele for whom disposable cash and patronage of the Grand are out of reach. Secondly, the on-screen violence of the desert pictures perpetuates the previously described antagonism that pervades the Bijou and Sloughborough's film-exhibition landscape. During the Bijou's inaugural screening under the couple's management, which is slow to attract passing trade, Matt and Jean greet Fazackalee by disconsolately uttering 'ug' and 'how'

in the clichéd manner of the native Americans and cowboys portrayed in the picture. Their mimicking stereotypical Indian salutations is a sarcastic expression of their disappointment in both the film and its attendance. Apart from this ironic re-enactment of the desert picture, there are other ways its westerns position the Bijou on the Indian side of the cowboy-Indian divide.

Transportation plays a part in presenting Sloughborough as a 'wild west' and the railway is key. As the couple's solicitor gives them a tour of the theatre he briefly mentions that it pre-dates the railway. The swathe the railway has cut through the Bijou's immediate environs suggests that the cinema continues to pay for past recalcitrance in remaining hard by the transportational interloper. In other words, the notional car park to which it is under pressure to give way has a precedent in the railway that didn't remove it from the landscape previously. Quill and Matt, who are compelled to mount projectors in the effort to quell their trembling as the neighbouring trains roll by, become counterparts to the on-screen riders (fig. 2.6a). Though both cowboy and Indian factions transport themselves on horseback, the railway is decidedly more problematic for the latter, as it is for the Bijou. In fact, a scene from the first desert picture shown at the Bijou depicts an Indian standing on the track in order deliberately to obstruct a train (fig. 2.6b). It is also fortuitous that the lamp houses of Quill's projectors are shaped like the covered wagons that belong to the iconography of the wild west. During the screening in which Matt takes over in the projection box from a drunkenly absent Quill with disastrous results, a pair of patrons discusses abandoning the cinema and catching the train to the pub. The Bijou's audience embraces the railway, even when it interrupts the film, and aren't wealthy enough to own cars. However, just as native Americans had to cede

territory to the new settlers, so the Bijou's audience is destined to relinquish their cinema so that the Grand's driving patrons might be better accommodated.

Figures 2.6a and 2.6b. In *The Smallest Show on Earth* Quill mounts the projector (2.6a). An on-screen Indian obstructs the railroad (2.6b)

Thirdly, the Bijou capitalises on cues within the desert pictures in order to maximise refreshment sales. By cranking up the heat in the auditorium the couple recreates the desert conditions depicted on screen. They then time the interval with the on-screen characters' thirstiest gasps so as to offer relief. In a similar fashion, in one desert picture an on-screen train arrives at the same time as one of the services into Sloughborough so that its images are enhanced by accidental effects created by the comings and goings of outside trains. Poor projection, or failure of the machinery, also produce effects that trigger audience participation. When Quill becomes too drunk to project, Matt's efforts create an on-screen 'riot' of comical failures in which he screens the leader, runs reels backwards, upside down, too fast or with asynchronous dialogue. The fact that such mishaps are almost welcomed by the audience as interesting diversions and opportunities to behave rowdily speaks to the dubious quality of both film and audience.

In *Smallest*, therefore, the films in the film, and their shoddy screenings, compound the portrayal of the Bijou's adherents as socially inferior. As Dave Rolinson tersely states, the Bijou is 'an outdated purveyor of lowest-common-

denominator entertainment'.[15] *Smallest*'s ambiguity towards the audience is taken up by Christine Geraghty in her passage on the way the film reflects the concerns of 1950s' exhibitors about changing audience trends. She says that 'the point of the film is that this version of cinema is not just unsustainable but may also be undesirable … the cinema crowd has the characteristics of the mob …'.[16] Despite being a light-hearted comedy, *Smallest* more than acknowledges that times are tough for the film industry. Rather than letting the Bijou survive Hardcastle's onslaught and ameliorating the anxieties pertaining to the future of cinema that *Smallest* expresses, the film delivers a happy ending that nonetheless doesn't seek to deny the straits that British cinema is in. The decline of the middle-class audience is a key component of this. The desert pictures mirror the fact that exhibition conditions are growing more difficult, and means of sustenance questionable.

In *Roses* Trevor is only seen projecting two films.[17] These are moments when crises pertaining to the world of the audience are writ large on the screen. Trevor first appears when required to effect the speedy repair of *Konga* (John Lemont, 1961), a British-American science-fiction coproduction that breaks partway through its screening. *Konga* snaps in the machine even as the representatives of the Rex's parent company are in manager Mr Davies' office imparting their decision to close the cinema. The buckling of the film image reflects the wider degradation of the auditorium with its leaking roof. It is also a sympathetic gesture (or perhaps one of solidarity) from one beast – the great

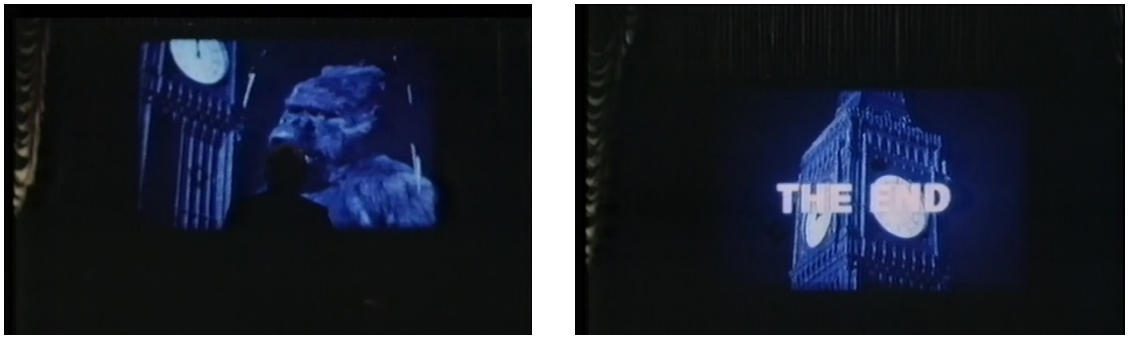
[15] Dave Rolinson, '"If They Want Culture, They Pay": Consumerism and Alienation in 1950s Comedies', in I McKillop and N Sinyard (eds), *British Cinema of the 1950s: A Celebration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p. 88.
[16] Christine Geraghty, *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the 'New Look'* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 19.
[17] Apart from *Konga*, the other film to appear in *Roses* is *Pop Gear* (Frederic Goode, 1965), which Trevor projects after the Rex closes and is largely constituted of popular music performances.

ape Konga – to its host, the Rex or 'king'. The image dissolves just as the eponymous ape, the subject of an experiment, is confronted by his ambitious scientist-creator whose laboratory he is in the process of smashing up. Trevor's deft 'rescue' of *Konga*, and his amelioration of its interruption by summoning Mona to the auditorium with her tray of ices, is juxtaposed with a scene in which Davies tries to engage the sympathies of the visiting representatives by arguing that Trevor 'came to us straight from school. He's known no other work outside these walls. It's his whole life'.

Even before *Konga*'s breakdown, the diegetic film image is marked by black flecks, which we subsequently recognise as patches of duct tape covering tears in the screen's fabric. The sparse audience *Konga* has drawn is divided into warring gangs of concessionary-rate patrons: badly behaved schoolchildren who annoy the seniors. We never see whether Konga's own act of vandalism within the film's diegesis is curtailed by the scientist. However, after the Rex is officially closed down, it is echoed when vandals wreak havoc in the vacant cinema. The epitaph they spray on the wall – 'this town is officially dead' – raises, for all its seemingly mindless counter-productivity, a protest linking the disappearance of the cinema to the town's identity, even its viability. The recession of film culture is a symptom of wider impoverishment.

Davies stops to watch *Konga*'s finale on his way to the projection box to summon Trevor to an impromptu meeting at which he will notify him of the Rex's closure. The rampaging King-Kong-sized ape, who, by the end of the film, has reached the Palace of Westminster, is confronted by troops wielding sub-machine guns and bazookas. He is felled at the foot of Big Ben just before the end credits roll (fig. 2.7a). Close-ups on Davies show his sadness. His feeling might be for the slain beast yet it also implies that *Konga*'s 'The End'

marks the Rex's last showing (fig. 2.7b). In this way, the Rex's closure is associated with Konga's destruction. The appearance of *Konga*'s ending in *Roses* transfigures it into a metaphor for the force deployed by the Thatcher government in containing its riotous foes; that is to say, the miners striking against pit closures. By means of its deployment of various shots from *Konga*, *Roses* associates the fate of cinema with the government of the day and, by extension, with its policies and purposes. These were interpreted by many at the time as hostile to regions beyond the south east of England, particularly those reliant on heavy industry and the communities such industry sustained. *Konga*, the film in the film, is an expressive site: for insinuating that the government of the day are implicated in the characters' troubles and for screening an ire they themselves rarely display. The screen becomes an interface where its context extends the significance of the film in the film. For example, the south Wales location of the auditorium reframes *Konga* as expressive of local anger at Thatcher's policies, which is a meaning it cannot bear elsewhere. In both British films, the projectionist's and the projectors' interventions, such as *Konga*'s breakdown or the effects of passing trains on a western, make him instrumental in allowing projection to produce contextually sensitive commentary.



Figures 2.7a and 2.7b. Mr Davies witnesses Konga's on-screen destruction at the hands of the authorities (2.7a) as *Konga* ends (2.7b) in *Coming Up Roses*

Cinema Paradiso: projectionist as spectator and filmmaker

In *Cinema Paradiso*,[18] a filmmaker (Jacques Perrin) recalls his childhood in Sicily including falling in love with cinema and becoming a projectionist by befriending Alfredo (Philippe Noiret), the projectionist at the local picture house. The film depicts the previous 'graduation' of the filmmaker Salvatore, or Toto (played by Salvatore Cascio as a child and Marco Leonardi as a teen), from the auditorium to the projection booth. It therewith cements the notion that the projectionist is a viewer par excellence. This transition of the projectionist from the auditorium to the booth happens in *Splendor* too. Luigi (Massimo Troisi), an adult, starts to attend the cinema regularly because he is obsessed with its usherette (Marina Vlady). He takes the opportunity to become even more involved in the establishment when he assumes the projectionist's position upon the retirement of the previous incumbent. It is one of *Splendor*'s many ironies that after Luigi enters the projection booth he becomes infatuated with cinema and loses interest in the usherette. In *Paradiso* the all-consuming nature of cinephilia is portrayed in melodramatic terms when Toto's love for Elena (Agnese Nano), his first girlfriend, is interpreted by Alfredo as threatening to usurp his passion for filmmaking and to endanger his future artistic career.

Even before Toto is trained as a projectionist, his spectatorship is portrayed as extraordinary or precocious. In the first sequence that takes place in the Paradiso, Toto secretes himself outside of the auditorium but pokes his head through the red curtains of its entrance so that he can watch Father

[18] *Cinema Paradiso* exists in multiple versions. It can be assumed throughout the present chapter that the one to which I refer is the 173-minute director's cut released in 2002, which is fifty minutes longer than the theatrical cut and therefore contains a number of scenes and plot elements missing from earlier versions.

Adelfio (Leopoldo Trieste) censor those scenes he considers risqué from *The Lower Depths* (*Les bas-fonds*) (Jean Renoir, 1936). Toto's position in the censorship scene is concealed like that of the projectionist. This seeming identification with Alfredo and its foreshadowing of his own projectionist destiny is reinforced when, on two occasions, we cut from a medium shot of Toto's face, a 'floating' head isolated from his body by the curtains through which it pokes, to a partial view of Alfredo's through the booth's port (figs. 2.8a and 2.8b).


Frame enlargements from *Cinema Paradiso* (figs. 2.8a-2.17).
Figures 2.8a and 2.8b. Toto's viewing of *The Lower Depths* (2.8a) imitates Alfredo's watching from the projection booth (2.8b)

One of the scene's pleasures is Toto's delighted anticipation of Father Adelfio's outraged eruptions, which are articulated by shouts of 'no' and his ringing a bell to indicate where cuts should be made. Toto barely suppresses his laughter in response. We see films screened later to the public in their censored forms and the noisy reception they get as a result of the obvious excision of kissing scenes. Toto is in the auditorium to witness, and relish, their reactions as well. The censorship scene makes him privy to more knowledge than that to which he is entitled. He is privileged as a spectator alongside Alfredo and the priest. Indeed, the phenomenon of spectatorship is heightened by its dual iterations. While watching the film Toto and Alfredo simultaneously monitor the priest and react to his responses.

In a subsequent scene in which Toto has managed to gain temporary entry into the booth before being ejected by Alfredo, he holds an excised filmstrip from *The Lower Depths* before him to examine it. This is a shot, which, as a still image, is frequently used in *Paradiso*'s paratext and has become somewhat iconic (fig. 2.9). We then adopt his point of view as he moves the series of identical images of Jean Gabin and Junie Astor locked in a passionate kiss through his fingers one frame at a time, as if recreating the action of the projector. This gesture portrays him as both 'projector' and audience member at once, which expresses something of the projectionist's own privileged position.

Figure 2.9. Toto recreates the action of the projector

In a later scene that takes place in the auditorium, Toto turns away from the screen towards the plaster moulding surrounding the booth's port, which is fashioned into a lion's head. The 'lion' comes to life in Toto's imagination by roaring. This sudden and conspicuous representation of a fantasy draws attention to Toto's fascination with the projection booth. It also draws attention to the light beam, which the lion seems to spew forth, which is above the heads of those in the audience. By following the beam back to its source, Toto looks in a different direction to most. The backward glance doesn't just indicate his

interest in the source of the image but is consistent with the reminiscing adult's mental process of looking back in revisiting childhood memories. Certain elements of the scene are repeated when Toto temporarily rejoins the mass of spectators in the run-up to the cinema fire in which the projector's light beam is crucial once again. In this sequence, Alfredo amazes Toto with his trick of making the film image pass beyond the walls of the booth. Toto chooses to enjoy the fruits of these magical moments in the company of the crowd. As he mingles with spectators in the square, he witnesses how happy this impromptu show makes them. Toto once again glances back and up towards the booth and he and Alfredo exchange conspiratorial winks.

Towards the end of *Paradiso*, the adult Toto is seen once again in an auditorium, this time in Rome, to watch the reel of excised kissing scenes, which is Alfredo's bequest. This viewing echoes the early scenes of his audience membership at the Paradiso, but his solitude expresses the large-scale desertion of the picture house in contemporary times. The sequence echoes the previous auditorium scenes in which light beams have helped to create Toto's sense of wonder regarding the cinema. The re-contextualised censored moments are no longer titillating. The passage of time produces a changed perspective towards – and meaning in – the shots and the adult Toto seems captivated and deeply moved by the projected image afresh. Toto's adoption of the position and posture of a viewer at the last reconfirms Millicent Marcus' assertion that 'film reception [is *Paradiso*'s] privileged object'.[19] My objective is to explore how projection and the projectionist are deployed in making film spectatorship central to the film.

[19] Millicent Marcus, *After Fellini: National Cinema in the Postmodern Age* (Baltimore, MD; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 200.

The projectionist's simultaneously inhabiting the positions of film spectator and producer finds one of its strongest iterations in *Paradiso*. At the level of narrative the child projectionist becomes an acclaimed director in adult life. Secondly, the historical narrative is constituted through Toto's autobiography, which focuses on his period as a projectionist. Thus the conceit is that the filmmaker-protagonist 'authors' the indispensable part of *Paradiso*'s story – his life as a projectionist – through flashback.

A complex aspect of the flashback is the picture of postwar life rendered. The adult Toto's nostalgia appears to prettify his 're-telling' of this period. However, there is more than one piece of evidence of the privation and pain of Toto's childhood in his early memories. Their marginalisation (rather than their wholesale suppression) represents the child's perspective on his world. The emotional and material adversities rendered visible aren't accorded the weight an adult consciousness would no doubt give them. Unlike in an Italian neorealist film in which everyday hardships form the surface and become the subject at hand, in *Paradiso*, 'reality' resides at the periphery of the vision of a child who pursues an agenda dictated by cinematic fascination instead. Communism, fascism, war, modernity and the economic boom are all present insofar as they serve the portrayal of a child's experience of cinema filtered through the consciousness of the adult.

I argue throughout the present study that in my chosen films the portrayal of the projectionist is both responsive to a specific historical and geographical context while also conforming to certain tropes common across all or most of his representations. Accordingly, Toto's childhood occurs at a particular and highly significant point in time and space; the postwar reconstruction of Italy, which is one of the film's major concerns. What is also produced in *Paradiso*, in

the form of flashback, is a highly subjective and personal story. The trope of the projectionist's view of the world, his vision and memory unites Toto with Chuck (Chuck McCann) from *The Projectionist* (Harry Hurwitz, 1971) and Bruno (Rüdiger Vogler) from *Kings of the Road* (Wim Wenders, 1976). Moreover, the film's expression of Toto's individuated view connects the projectionist and the filmmaker. The notion of the projectionist authoring or re-authoring the film, and becoming a filmmaker, is a trope that occurs in films in which the projectionist doesn't become a filmmaker in the literal sense such as *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, 1924) and *The Projectionist*.

The early scenes in which Father Adelfio, in concert with Alfredo, censors *The Lower Depths* depict the projectionist 're-cutting' Renoir's movie. Alfredo's sheepish admission of not always putting back the excised lengths before returning the film to the distributor means that he is responsible for the 'projectionist's cut' of a film that re-circulates if only until another projectionist intervenes. Alfredo's eventually making up a reel from edited shots produces an original film of sorts. In the real world this practice was, anecdotally, one of the projectionist's privileges. It wasn't unusual for pornographic films in particular to arrive at a cinema several minutes short of their official running times because previous projectionists had removed shots or scenes for their own use.[20] *Paradiso* director Tornatore's cameo as the projectionist who screens the reel of kissing shots for an adult Toto in the Roman auditorium seems to be an authorial signature which reinforces the projectionist-film producer continuum.

[20] This was relayed to me in passing in a conversation with Ewen MacLeod, the projectionist at Bristol's Arnolfini cinema, at the opening night of Richard Nicholson's exhibition, 'The Projectionists', on 19 April 2016. See p. 18, n. 7.

Figure 2.10. Two projectors and scales of cinematic endeavour

The composition of one scene in particular expresses the beginnings of Toto's projectionist-to-filmmaker trajectory. It takes place in the new Paradiso's booth and depicts Toto playing footage he has recorded on his home-movie camera by projecting it onto the bare wall (fig. 2.10). The projection booth's rewind bench, which is in the foreground, is strewn with small film cans, seemingly belonging with, and piled up in front of, a home-movie projector. With a wall behind them, which divides them from the room where the 35mm projector is housed, Toto and Alfredo inhabit the middle 'plane' of the frame. In the centre, revealed by the open door, but helping to form a further plane, we see the 35mm machine projecting *Modern Times* (Charles Chaplin, 1936) into the auditorium. The booth's sparse décor 'declutters' the mise-en-scène and makes plain the two scales of cinematic endeavour as expressed by the two projectors and the film spools that litter the scene, some of which seem to be miniature versions of the larger ones, as if they are Toto's 'toys' and his filmmaking juvenilia, which he hopes one day will 'grow up' into films that might be projected on the larger machine in front of an audience.

Cinema Paradiso and the exhibition landscape

Although *Paradiso* is a nostalgic look back at the heyday of Italian cinema, it is precise, rather than hazy, about the historical period with which it is concerned. The films in the film that form part of the adult Toto's flashback date this as the decade between 1948 and 1957. The selection of this period alone, which covers the first years of the Italian republic founded after the second world war and the strongest period of growth in terms of Italy's postwar economic miracle, might be an unmistakable indicator of *Paradiso*'s political concerns, if it weren't for the film's 'prettiness'. This, according to Rosalind Galt, seems to militate against its being taken seriously as having much to say about politics.[21] The scenic, rather charming images of Giancaldo's sun-bathed central square almost belie the postwar scarcity and unemployment evident in the narrative. Yet, however frivolously the poverty of Toto's family is referenced, it is nonetheless plainly stated. The sound of wind chimes in Toto's upscale Roman apartment accompany us into his flashback in which, as an altar boy, he can barely stay awake to ring his bell. To Father Adelfio's complaint about this, he replies, 'At home we don't even eat at lunchtime. The vet says that's why I'm tired'.

That the village of Giancaldo is working-class is iterated in subtler ways as well. For example, the motif of the bell relates to the village's poverty and marginalisation. Father Adelfio takes what looks like the same altar bell that fails to keep Toto awake into the cinema with him to indicate to Alfredo where to make cuts in the films he wants to censor. Early on in the film, an aerial tracking shot through a belfry provides us with our first view of Giancaldo's main

[21] Rosalind Galt, 'The Prettiness of Italian Cinema', in Louis Bayman and Sergio Rigoletto (eds), *Popular Italian Cinema* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 55.

square, and bells peal from both church and school. Bells thus link the town's institutions and suggest that the cinema is one such. Church bells similarly feature in the soundscape of the neorealist film *La Terra Trema* (Luchino Visconti, 1948), which deals with the harsh working conditions of Sicilian fishermen, and while it is screened at the Paradiso we hear its bells peal twice into the auditorium – among the cries of the film's diegetic fishermen – as if to identify its Sicilian village milieu and the privations of its inhabitants with Giancaldo. Later, in the comedy *The Firemen of Viggiu* (*I pompieri di Viggiù*) (Mario Mattoli, 1949), which plays in the run-up to the Paradiso's fire, its star, a comedian also called Toto, emerges from inside an enormous bell – during a dance number – simultaneously ringing a small bell like the one used at the altar (fig. 2.11). That this film sends villagers to the Paradiso in droves reflects Peter Bondanella's observation that the comedian Toto 'became the darling of the less advantaged classes in the provinces and in the impoverished South'.[22] As will emerge in this chapter, in *Paradiso* the projectionist is a labourer in the same socio-economic class as those for whom he shows films: Alfredo continually inculcates the idea in Toto that cinematic projection is a job without prospects. The last instance of the sounding of a bell is the constant tolling in the background of Alfredo's funeral procession, providing figurative resonance between contemporary Giancaldo and that of memory.

The initial foregrounding of the parish cinema is another way in which the film's Italian or Sicilian context is emphasised. The scene in which Father Adelfio censors *The Lower Depths* refers not only to the power and reach of the Catholic church, but also to the way that the establishment of cinemas was often politically motivated in Italy. From the late 1930s, and particularly in the

[22] Peter Bondanella, *A History of Italian Cinema* (New York: Continuum, 2009), p. 113.

immediate postwar years, the Catholic church took the lead in establishing new cinemas, but was mimicked in this at certain points by the fascist government[23] and left-wing organisations.[24] The Paradiso's marginal location makes it likely to be a *terza visione*, or third-run cinema, commanding much lower ticket prices than first- or second-run houses. According to Bondanella, a third-run ticket could cost 'as little as 50-100 lire',[25] and indeed, Toto receives a beating from his mother (Antonella Attili) for spending fifty lire at the cinema instead of on milk. Another indication of the Paradiso's marginal status and location is that on two occasions the audience's demand for a film outstrips the Paradiso's capacity to programme it for a sufficient period. Such problems of the small exhibitor in an Italian context become explicit in connection with the popular melodrama, *Chains* (*Catene*) (Raffaello Matarazzo, 1949), whose loan period the distributor is unwilling to extend despite the cinema manager, Don Ciccio's (Enzo Cannavale), entreaties. At Toto's suggestion, Don Ciccio attempts to remedy this by opening an additional auditorium in a neighbouring locale and having Toto's friend Boccia bicycle the two reels of *Chains* between it and the Paradiso, in turn. The scheme fails. However, it mirrors the earlier unsuccessful solution when demand for *The Firemen of Viggiu* similarly overtaxes the Paradiso's capacities. In this case, Alfredo spontaneously creates a second 'auditorium' in the public square and projects the film in the Paradiso and the square simultaneously. The fire that razes the parish cinema to the ground is the devastating consequence.

[23] The government sponsored the opening of around a thousand cinemas between 1937 and 1940. See Pierre Sorlin, *Italian National Cinema, 1896-1996* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 71.
[24] Ibid., p. 74.
[25] Bondanella, p. 178.

Figure 2.11. The comedian, Toto, with big and small bells in *The Firemen of Viggiu*

The configuration of the cinematic apparatus and the projection booth itself indicates the Italian context in which *Paradiso* unfolds. In both its pre- and post-fire eras, *Paradiso*'s projection booths house a single projector, and this set-up is seen in the booth represented in *Splendor* as well. In Italy it was common to run up to six thousand feet of film at a time from one projector,[26] and, as a consequence, the feature film was always interrupted partway through so that the projectionist could change reels. In many other countries a two-projector set-up was preferred and we see this configuration in *The Smallest Show on Earth*, for example. In that case, a feature was normally split over a series of two thousand-foot reels and, as each came to an end, the projectionist performed a changeover between the machines, allowing the film to run uninterrupted if desired. David Forgacs confirms this when he says that, 'Italian films were conventionally divided into a first and second half, and projected in cinemas with an interval between the two halves …'.[27] An on-screen title card introduces the second half of *Chains* (fig. 2.12). It is this interval between the

[26] Another film with a child projectionist, *Cartouches gauloises* (Mehdi Charef, 2007), which is set during the 1960s, suggests that the one-projector set-up might have been adopted by at least some Algerian cinemas and was therefore practised beyond Italy.
[27] David Forgacs and Lesley Caldwell, audio commentary on *Ossessione* (1943) (DVD, British Film Institute, UK, 2003) ASIN: B000094P2R.

halves of *Chains* that Don Ciccio tries to exploit by showing the film in two places at once. Italian filmmakers planned and structured their films as productions of two 'acts' separated by this compulsory interval.[28] In this way, the circumstances of Italian exhibition had direct consequences on cinematic production, a state of affairs that mirrors the connection between projectionist and filmmaker I posit.

Figure 2.12. Italian films were typically split over two reels and structured around two acts

Close-ups on the Paradiso's projector's nameplate indicate its Milan-based manufacturer, Prevost (fig. 2.13). Though they are brief, there are three. It seems to me that they deliberately seek to bring to the attention of those who would notice such details, and to those for whom Prevost is a familiar name, the machinery's Italian provenance. Other projectors used in the flashback sequences of *Paradiso* are Italian as well. In the new post-fire Paradiso's booth, the projector is a Cinemeccanica. In the sequence in which Toto and Don Ciccio establish a second auditorium of the showing of *Chains*, it is a Fedi

[28] Ibid.

model.[29] As in *Smallest*, the provenance of the projectors used is consistent with the nationality of the cinema portrayed.

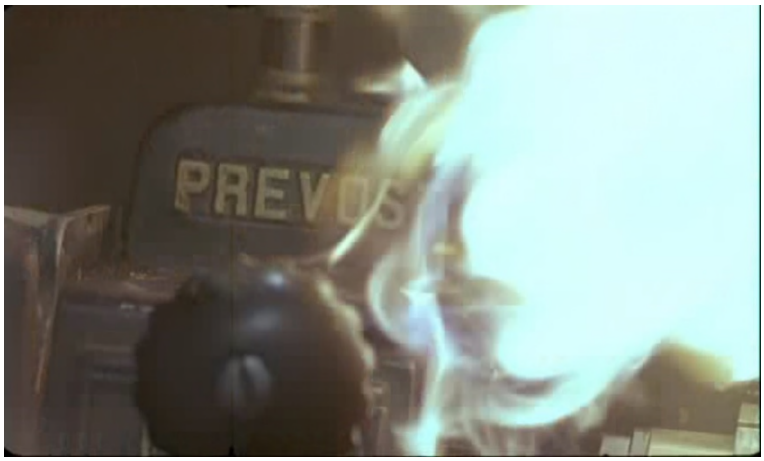


Figure 2.13. There are several close-ups on the nameplate indicating the projector's Milan-based manufacturer, Prevost

However, prevailing Italian conditions have serious safety implications, to which the climactic fire scene attests, even if the characters hardly comment upon them. When discussing various aspects of *Paradiso*, including the makes and models of the projectors shown, contemporary projectionists and scholars can be confounded at the concept of a six thousand-foot reel of highly flammable nitrate.[30] Once the serious injuries caused by such a burning reel exploding in front of him render Alfredo redundant as a projectionist, as well as almost taking his life, there are only one or two brief reservations mooted about a ten-year-old boy assuming his role in contravention of child labour laws. Early

[29] This conclusion regarding the identities of the projectors used in the film is reached by one of the contributors to the following thread on a message board for Italian projectionists, which starts with someone spotting a mistake regarding the Fedi projector used to project *Chains*: Anon., 'Le Gaf Tecniche Di *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*', Proiezionisti.com (2005) <http://www.cinematech.it/forum/viewtopic.php?t=1020>, accessed 24 April 2018. The thread on another message board named in the footnote below (n.30) conducts a debate on whether projectors featured are Prevost, Cinemeccanica or Fedi. In any case, the consensus across both fora is that all the projectors featured are Italian makes and models.

[30] Leo Enticknap enquires of a fellow contributor to a projectionist's message board, '...are you sure that 6,000ft reels of nitrate were regularly shown in Italy? That sounds like suicide to me... I've seen a 100ft roll of nitrate burn, the thought of 6,000ft going up is terrifying'. See p. 2 of Anon., '*Cinema Paradiso* and Cinemecchanica (sic) in Italy...', *Film-Tech Forums* (2001) <http://www.film-tech.com/ubb/f1/t002155.html>, accessed 25 April 2016.

on in the film we learn that Alfredo himself became a projectionist at about the same age. In other words, *Paradiso* underplays, yet doesn't quite suppress, the hazards associated with the Paradiso's location and geographical and historical context. The role of projectionist is one that few willingly choose, and Alfredo comments, when trying to discourage Toto from becoming a projectionist and emphasising how hard it is, that he is the only one in Giancaldo 'stupid' or 'unfortunate' enough to be a projectionist. Since Toto's permanent ascension to the booth is his ambition fulfilled, it is framed in a congratulatory spirit which accompanies the cinema's re-opening as a commercial enterprise after the fire. Yet the circumstances that exploit children and expose them to mortal danger on a daily basis aren't emphasised, even as the consequences of the fire for Alfredo's future life are clear; even as Alfredo himself makes no secret of the hard life the projectionist leads and even as Don Ciccio explicitly states that he has manipulated the law so that Toto can project.

As described above, *Paradiso*'s concern with cinematic exhibition grants us access to some of the political issues its detractors claim it ignores.[31] The 'histories' (of exhibition apparatus, of the cinema worker and of the cinephile and cinemagoer) revealed in *Paradiso* are fused or amalgamated in the figure of the projectionist-protagonist whose Sicilian provenance, context, conditions and hardships are key. The harsh and precarious circumstances of film exhibition thus respond to Sicilian geographical and Italian historical context as well as issues common to exhibition regardless of where it takes place.

[31] Galt, 'The Prettiness of Italian Cinema', p. 55.

Social use of cinema in *Cinema Paradiso*

As is the case with *Roses*, the Paradiso's audience is constituted, in part, by a set of minor characters that appear repeatedly, and become familiar, over the course of the film. They populate and characterise a local constituency which forms the context in which film exhibition takes place: the world of the audience. They maintain film reception as a prominent concern. The camera's focus on them – as well as on the screen – reveals the role that cinema plays in daily life. Rather than a visit to the Paradiso being a special occasion, the audience's behaviour gives the impression that it is part of the daily routine, and incorporate certain bodily functions and habits such as sleeping, nursing infants, masturbation and sex. On two occasions, the greetings yelled out by men into the auditorium as they enter show them treating the picture house as an intimate sphere rather than a public space in which their behaviour might be regulated by the film or newsreel in progress. Toto's using the family's milk money to buy a cinema ticket echoes Stephen Gundle's suggestion that for Italians in this era, going to the cinema could be almost as high a spending priority as food or clothing.[32] In other words, in the Paradiso's parish-cinema phase its main function is to afford the village a communal 'living room'. Marcus' notion that *Paradiso* depicts the 'indiscriminate cinephilia' of the period proposes that the occasion for gathering together provided by exhibition is a vital component of cinemagoing that is at least as important as what is shown.[33]

The Paradiso's auditorium is organised, to an extent, according to social groups. *Paradiso* initially presents Toto and his classmates as prominent in the

[32] Stephen Gundle, 'From Neorealism to Luci Rosse: Cinema, Politics, Society, 1945-85', in Zygmunt G Barański and Robert Lumley (eds), *Culture and Conflict in Postwar Italy: Essays on Mass and Popular Culture* (Macmillan in association with the Graduate School of European and International Studies, University of Reading, 1990), p. 201.
[33] Marcus, p. 200.

auditorium. They sit in the front rows and the camera often holds on the boys with a medium shot, or close-up, in order to scrutinise their attitudes and behaviours towards what they watch, even when the film seems almost too demanding to be intelligible to a child such as *La Terra Trema*. This positioning is also part of a comedic scene in which the usher reprimands a row of masturbating youths as Brigitte Bardot sunbathes nude in *...And God Created Woman* (*Et Dieu... créa la femme*) (Roger Vadim, 1956). Simultaneous to this, the boys' older counterparts visit a makeshift brothel at the back of the stalls. Divisions along class lines are maintained. A running joke is repeated over several scenes in which the same audience member in the circle leans over and spits on the hoi polloi below him in the stalls, signalling his disdain for the lower-class patrons. This small subplot is resolved when he finally receives what looks like a soiled nappy thrown from below in his face. Since the audience's social identities are acknowledged in the way they inhabit the auditorium, the cinema straddles private and public space. On one hand, it is a place in which people regularly spend their leisure, and so treat it somewhat as an extension of home. Yet on the other, they assemble according to how they are identified in public.

When Alfredo uses the projection equipment to refract the projector beam so that it bears the film image into the public square, the Paradiso's situation at the centre of village life becomes more obvious. The narrative background of the scene is one in which villagers are angered by being denied access to a popular film. The priest fears they might turn violent. The police are called in to control the crowds. That such civil unrest might be occasioned by cinema, and that it spills out into the public square, suggests the importance of cinema and cinemagoing to the assembled masses. It equates the

auditorium with the public square and suggests that the civic life of the village is conducted around the shared ideal of cinema and cinemagoing as if it were a political cause. By inference the portrayal of the auditorium and its population suggests that cinema and cinemagoing replicate society in microcosm and that cinema itself might form a social and political sphere through which, through the films shown, alternative political and social values and ways of life might be signalled.

At the same time, the repeated insistence on the part of a village-idiot type character that the square belongs to him is a refrain which, though it starts in Toto's childhood, accompanies the deliberate destruction of the Paradiso in contemporary Giancaldo. The idiot has the last word in reasserting his ownership of the square after the cinema has been knocked down. That it is transformed into a car park – into commercial space which will service the needs of consumers and businesses whose pursuits are primarily acquisitive – makes the idiot's words prophetic.

A Useful Life seems to pose, directly, a question regarding cinema's use. The English title is almost a direct translation of the original, *La vida útil*. Though neither rendering of the title is posed as a question, the concept of the use of a life spent working in the cinema raises the issue. Halfway through the film a representative from a public funding body relays the news to Jorge and Martínez (Manuel Martinez Carril), the manager of the Cinemateca, that his organisation no longer supports unprofitable causes like their cinema. This withdrawal of public money is the final nail in the Cinemateca's coffin. The scene reveals that the Cinemateca had been subsidised by the public; support now deemed unjustified. It is another iteration of cinema's abandonment by the public and of the calling into question of its use.

At the end of Jorge's last day at the Cinemateca, he tracks down Paola (Paola Venditto), a woman he has been pursuing tentatively with invitations to screenings. His new sense of purpose is conveyed by the odyssey of a bus journey, phone calls, visits to the university law library, a lecture and to the barber that all anticipate his accosting Paola in the final scene and suggesting they go out immediately on a date. His invitation to watch a movie, though striking a rather ironic note given his redundancy, intimates that he wants to engage with cinema on a different footing. His interest isn't in a screening of *Greed* (Erich von Stroheim, 1924), or in a retrospective of the films of Manoel de Oliveira or in an obscure Icelandic film, which are items on the Cinemateca's programme. On this occasion the cinema provides a means to spend time with a woman.

The persistence of cinema in *Cinema Paradiso*

All the films in this chapter contemplate the bulldozing, closure or conversion of picture houses. *Roses*' opening credit sequence is accompanied by a series of images of derelict Welsh cinemas, which indicates that many exhibition venues have been left to rot. *Paradiso* produces two pictures of the Paradiso in ruins: the smoking rubble to which the parish cinema is reduced by the fire and a scene in which the post-fire Paradiso is bulldozed for yet another car park. Gatherings outside of the Paradiso on each occasion encourage comparison between the two situations (figs. 2.14a and 2.14b). While the despair of priest and villagers sets the tone in the first case of destruction, in contemporary Giancaldo youths are a prominent presence at the cinema's demolition, just as children are placed in the front row of the auditorium earlier on in the film. As the smoke clears after the demolition the youngsters' laughing faces show the

Paradiso to have once more provided spectacle, excitement and the opportunity for fun. Their riding over the Paradiso's remains on motorbikes expresses the child's changed relationship to cinema: its destruction is all it offers in terms of fascination. On this second destruction the youths' lack of sentiment leaves us in little doubt that the cinema has finally been ousted from the village.


Figures 2.14a and 2.14b. Crowds are present at the first destruction of the Paradiso by fire (2.14a) and at its demolition (2.14b)

As cinema's main rival, in terms of luring the audience, TV is only mentioned once in *Smallest*. Meanwhile *Roses* finds more than one way in which to point to video as one of the culprits for cinema's demise. *Paradiso* features TV far more prominently than either. In one scene Toto and Alfredo sit side by side in the Paradiso's auditorium to witness its inaugural screening of TV. Their occupation of the auditorium illuminates the projectionist's 'demotion' to the audience and the redundancy of the booth in the face of TV. Alfredo warns against the danger he 'smells' in an innovation he can't see, and his suspicions are compounded by Toto's inadequate explanation of how moving images can be projected without film.

In *Paradiso*, TV is associated, like the phone, with ruptures in human relationships. As TV makes its debut in the Paradiso's auditorium, Toto's sweetheart, Elena, imparts the news that she and Toto will be separated by her family's decamping to Tuscany for the summer. In the scenes in which middle-

aged Toto tries to communicate with Elena (played in middle age by Brigitte Fossey), we cut to his mother (played as an older woman by Pupella Maggio) picking up the phone but having Elena hang up rather than speak to her. As this happens, the carnivalesque dancing display on Toto's mother's TV underlines her solitary evening and her being 'out of the loop'. TV's portrayal as nefarious in its effects is complicated only by the reference Alfredo's widow (Isa Danieli) makes to his having seen Toto's films on the small screen. TV thus affords Alfredo a sort of contact with Toto. Despite this, the medium, like the newspaper articles about Toto he has read to him repeatedly, obviates the need for actual interaction between the two, which maintains their distance. The fact that we only hear of Toto's work being shown publicly on TV (rather than in the cinema) perhaps completes what we might view as the increasing migration of movies from the big to the small screen. This process starts with the Paradiso's accommodation of TV and ends with TV's accommodation of Toto's films.

Splendor is even more pessimistic about TV as cinema's enemy and usurper. Its characters are palpably bitter about its negative impact on picture-house attendance. In one conversation, characters speculate about how TV's showing of Visconti's *The Leopard* (*Il gattopardo*) (1963) might have detrimentally impacted on the evening's turnout at the Splendor. At a different point in the film, and in a rejoinder to projectionist Luigi's interrogation of a group of men as to why they don't go to the cinema, one reads aloud from the newspaper the preponderance of classics being shown on TV in a single evening. They include two films starring the popular Italian comedian Toto referred to above, films by Orson Welles and by Claude Chabrol, the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers picture *Follow the Fleet* (Mark Sandrich, 1936), *Scandal in Sorrento* (*Pane, amore e...*) (Dino Riso, 1955), a Jerry Lewis film,

Fort Apache (John Ford, 1948) and Hitchcock's *Rear Window*. This indicates Italian TV as an alternative platform for film culture.[34] However, the scene in which Luigi questions the men concludes with one stating that he has no intention of watching films on TV either, which suggests that cinema's rival medium won't redeem it forever.

Nostalgia is a phenomenon that features in *Paradiso* in various ways. While walking in Alfredo's funeral cortège, Don Ciccio intones that 'the cinema has become a memory'. This pronouncement sees him adopt a stance opposed to that taken by Alfredo when, hissing in Toto's ear he advises him as he departs Giancaldo for Rome: 'Don't come back. Don't think about us. Don't look back, don't write. Don't give in to nostalgia…' Alfredo's death allows the nostalgia (against which he tries to immunise Toto by effectively 'exiling' him to the mainland), to seep, or rather to flood, back in. During his return to Giancaldo Toto's mother diagnoses his problems forming relationships as his being 'too attached to the past' and their conversation ends with her telling him to let go of it, echoing Alfredo's earlier exhortation.

Alfredo's insistent refutation of nostalgia clears space for alternative readings of *Paradiso*. He sees nostalgia as a stagnant force hostile to creativity. However, his words jar, paradoxically, with the predominant effect of *Paradiso* as it depicts the past as a rural idyll and incorporates a romantic plot. Alfredo's undercutting the nostalgic tone of the film is one of a succession of elements that allude to alternative possibilities. Via other elements which are present but underplayed, the film seeks to suggest that Italian history could have developed in other directions than it did. This political reading of *Paradiso* is based on certain insinuations regarding what didn't transpire but could have.

[34] Sorlin, p. 147.

For example, the peripheral presence of communists and their works allude to the possibility that conditions, at one time, might have seemed ripe for communism to take hold. However, other factors, such as the Catholic church's influence over cultural life offer possible reasons why it didn't.

William Hope refers to *Paradiso*'s 'narrative of extremely limited futurity'.[35] This 'limited futurity' theme is reflected in the fact that neither Alfredo (who doesn't manage – finally – to graduate from school without Toto's help in the examination) nor Toto sires children. Instead, a kind of lineage is perpetuated through the projectionist's role. Even so, the projectionist 'genealogy', too, dies with Toto. That *Paradiso* is so celebratory of its heritage might lead one to question what the film itself promises with regards to Italian cinema's prospects. *Paradiso* doesn't present as at all formally innovative or experimental as a piece of filmmaking. Yet Clodagh Brook argues that autobiography is a feature of the Italian cinema of the 1980s and '90s and cites plenty of examples, including *Paradiso*, which reveal filmmakers asking questions about the future of the art.[36] Although *Paradiso*'s death-of-cinema and limited-futurity motifs are undeniable, they are undercut by its 'new cinema Paradiso' Italian title; the resurrection we witness the picture house undergo after its first 'death' by fire and by Alfredo's warnings against dwelling on the past. In other words, the cinema is continually reborn and perhaps the contemporary crisis to which *Paradiso* alludes merely heralds a renewed interest in the medium.

---

[35] William Hope, 'Giuseppe Tornatore: Nostalgia; Emotion; Cognition', in William Hope (ed.), *Italian Cinema: New Directions* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), p. 57.
[36] Clodagh Brook, 'Screening the Autobiographical', in William Hope (ed.), *Italian Cinema: New Directions* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), p. 31.

The film in the film in *Cinema Paradiso*

A neglected facet of scholarship relating to *Paradiso* is its deployment of the film in the film. My analysis of this aspect of the film focuses on how films in the film relate to, or construct, the diegetic audience. *Paradiso* teems with quotations of films, not only as excerpts screened in the cinema but in the form of movie posters or quotations of lines of dialogue.

The fire, which ravages the parish cinema, effaces the Hollywood idols celebrated in the images that festoon the walls of Alfredo's projection booth. Preeminent among the images in this space is one of Buster Keaton; its occupying a position above the viewing port is revealed when Alfredo closes the projector's magazine cover in his very first scene. The image's proximity to the projector references Keaton's projectionist in *Sherlock Jr.*. In later scenes this portrait 'oversees' the conversation in which Alfredo tries to discourage Toto from aspiring to projection; seems to witness Toto's meddling with the projector behind Alfredo's back and 'observes' Toto's projectionist's training.[37] Similarly, Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman seem to look on as Toto and Alfredo argue about Toto's taking possession of the filmstrips (fig. 2.9). As flames lick at the edges of their portraits, Keaton, Bogart, Bergman and others appear to have been sacrificed in the tragedy. The camera also holds on two representations from the 1930s: a poster of *Possessed* (Clarence Brown, 1931), which is one of a series of pairings of Clark Gable and Joan Crawford during the 1930s at MGM, and one of 1932's *As You Desire Me* (George Fitzmaurice) starring Greta Garbo and Erich von Stroheim. The sequence ends on a shot of

[37] Another part of *Paradiso* alludes to *Sherlock Jr.*. To spare Toto further beating from his mother, Alfredo claims that the milk money Toto spent on the movies was found among the post-show detritus. This recalls a scene in *Sherlock Jr.* in which the projectionist is repeatedly manipulated into giving away the banknotes found in his janitorial sweepings to those who claim to have lost theirs in the movie theatre.

a statuette of the Virgin Mary succumbing to the flames. The equation between religious icons and film actors illuminates Hollywood iconography and its formation of a firmament of stars that look down. Neither the religious nor the film idols are reinstated in the new Paradiso's booth.

The films quoted in *Paradiso* chart the ascendency of Italian cinema in the postwar period and its relationship to Hollywood: its eclipsing Hollywood but incorporating features of Hollywood cinema as a strategy to increase its audience appeal. Despite trailers for *Stagecoach* (John Ford, 1939) and *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (Stanley Donen, 1954) and showings of *The Knockout* (Mack Sennett, 1914), *Scarface* (Howard Hawks and Richard Rosson, 1932), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Victor Fleming, 1941) and the 'appearance' of the soundtrack of *Modern Times*, in *Paradiso* as a whole Hollywood clips are heavily outnumbered. The obvious exception is the kissing reel, in which Hollywood pairings constitute roughly half of those included, though this reinforces the argument that Hollywood's dominance is already being seriously challenged before Toto assumes Alfredo's position as projectionist.

Italian cinema's prominence begins with the quotation of neorealist films. Depictions of such are contained within the era of the pre-fire parish cinema, which is consistent with neorealism's subsiding in the early 1950s.[38] Apart from *The Lower Depths* in the censorship scene, the first three features screened for a full auditorium are neorealist productions: *La Terra Trema*, *The Mill on the Po* (*Il mulino del Po*) (Alberto Lattuada, 1949) and *In the Name of the Law* (*In nome della legge*) (Pietro Germi, 1949). *La Terra Trema* is received ambivalently. In

[38] Peter Brunette, *The Films of Michelangelo Antonioni* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 18.

an excerpt shown, Sicilian fishermen complain about subsistence wages.[39] A scene in the public square that follows the screening of this film sees the audience briefly debating – and misunderstanding – the crux of its message regarding how collective action might end the exploitation of the fishermen. When a known, or reputed, communist is then refused a job by employers waiting in the public square after the film, the same scene also shows that the villagers (like the on-screen fishermen) are at the mercy of those who would take advantage of their need for work. This is an ironic comment which sheds light on the failure of the fishermen to secure better working conditions in *La Terra Trema*: Sicily isn't fertile ground for communism. Similarly, as soon as *Fine* marks the end of *The Mill on the Po*, the audience jump up from their seats as if simply waiting for this signal to dismiss them, and we cut to the village blacksmith snoring.

A significant difference in the reception of a neorealist film is appreciable with *In the Name of the Law*. It garners rapturous applause from the stalls but not the dress circle, who indicate disgust. The positive response is occasioned by a climactic scene that shows a new arrival in the Sicilian town in which it is set: that of a judge, who arrests a mafioso. This is the screening that marks the start of Toto's projectionist training. The success of the on-screen judge accompanies Toto's first operation of the apparatus under Alfredo's supervision. In extra-diegetic reality, Pietro Germi styled his neorealist film after the Hollywood western and it was a hit.[40] In other words, Toto's arrival in the old Paradiso's booth coincides with a neorealism influenced by popular genres.

---

[39] Visconti's film was originally supposed to be a short commissioned by the Communist Party. However, Visconti spent seven months in the fishing community and it became a feature film.
[40] *In the Name of the Law* beat *The Firemen of Viggiu* at the box office in 1949, coming third. See Carlo Celli and Marga Cottino-Jones, *A New Guide to Italian Cinema* (New York; Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 172.

Hollywood influence is detectable in *Bitter Rice* (*Riso amaro*) (Giuseppe De Santis, 1949) as well. Although we don't see how the film is received by an audience, we briefly see Father Adelfio jump up and shake his bell in response to one of its kissing scenes. The film did well at the box office[41] and launched Silvana Mangano as 'the first Italian diva of the postwar era'.[42] Despite its popularity it was criticised by some left-wing critics for 'betraying … socialist realism' because it combined erotic images and Hollywood genres.[43] The point at which Toto starts to project also, accordingly, marks a period of much livelier audience engagement. They bellow their complaints in response to the bad framing of *Return of the Black Eagle* (*Aquila nera*) (Riccardo Freda, 1946), a hugely popular costume drama;[44] they collectively cover their faces and scream when Spencer Tracy appears in an excerpt from *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and the response to *The Firemen of Viggiu* is so wild that the Paradiso is razed to the ground.

The Firemen of Viggiu prefigures Toto's permanent 'takeover' of the booth. As is mentioned above, its star is his namesake. People's clamouring to see him triggers a chain of events that leads to *Paradiso*'s Toto becoming a fireman of sorts in rescuing Alfredo from the flames. As I will demonstrate, Italian film continues its increasing orientation towards its audience's tastes in the new Paradiso.

---

[41] *Bitter Rice* came sixth at the box office in 1949. See ibid.
[42] Gian Piero Brunetta, *The History of Italian Cinema: A Guide to Italian Film from its Origins to the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 139.
[43] Bondanella, p. 109.
[44] Even though *Return of the Black Eagle* is a historical adventure story rather than a work that purports to be neorealist, the class struggle is nonetheless present according to descriptions of its plot. The film concerns a Russian soldier who takes revenge on an evil landowner. This clip is identified in Celli and Cottino-Jones, p. 136 and the same source informs us that it was number one at the Italian box office in 1946 (p. 171).

'As a cliché of the time had it, right after the war "one made films either about the people or for the people"'.[45] After the doors have been flung wide for the Paradiso's re-opening, Don Ciccio declares, 'This cinema is for you!'. With its implication that the Paradiso's previous iteration wasn't 'for you', this pronouncement seems to promise a cinema that will 'court' the audience. This is signalled immediately by the new Paradiso's gratification of its spectators with the kind of kissing shot long censored by the parish priest, which occurs in *Anna* (Alberto Lattuada, 1951). *Anna* was the second most popular film at the Italian box office in 1952 and therefore reflects the increased focus on giving the audience what it wants.[46] This choice of film – together with the two that succeed it, that of the tear-jerking melodrama *Chains* and *...And God Created Woman*[47] – indicates a sudden consciousness of women that mirrors Toto's own awakening adolescent interest in them. In fact, a scene from the pre-fire segment of *Paradiso* anticipates this when Toto's friend Boccia, who is unfailingly a step ahead of Toto in sexual matters, is seen looking through a slide-viewing device at an image of Rita Hayworth dressed in black as *Gilda* (Charles Vidor, 1946). We also catch strains of Hayworth's (or rather her playback singer's) rendition of *Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered* from the film musical *Pal Joey* (George Sidney, 1957), which traverses the still air of the public square from a mysterious source as Toto waves goodbye to a departing school friend.[48] The song's manifestation is a siren call; its insinuation into the

[45] Brunette, p. 18.
[46] Celli and Cottino-Jones, p. 173.
[47] Strictly speaking, this series of excerpts is punctuated by *The Gold of Naples* (*L'oro di Napoli*) (Vittorio De Sica, 1954). However, it is a brief glimpse – rendered as Toto's view through the port in order to re-focus the projector – whereas the three longer citations depict the audience's reactions and interactions.
[48] The evocation of Hayworth in 1957's *Pal Joey* is asynchronous with the late-1940s or early 1950s era portrayed in this scene in which Toto and his classmates are still small boys. This is a liberty taken with chronology. It anticipates Toto's being 'bewitched, bothered and bewildered' by Elena, a situation that comes to a head in the film's representation of 1957.

mise-en-scène of a sultry summer's day heralds the next (post-fire) phase of the film in which women will come to the fore. Similarly, the departure of the communist family of Toto's friend prefigures the adaptation of neorealism to more popular forms of cinema and the betrayal of social realism of which films such as *Bitter Rice* were accused as mentioned above. The family's quitting Sicily for Russia also supports the notion of both the southern rural parts of Italy and its northern cities being somewhat unreceptive to communism.

Figure 2.15. The clips shown from *Anna* suppress the protagonist's identity as a nun in favour of flashbacks to her sexy past

Like *Paradiso*, *Anna* uses the protagonist's extended flashback to recount a past life. This isn't evident, however, from the clips shown in *Paradiso*, which only depict the heroine's past life and thus omit the fact that Anna (Silvana Mangano) has become a nun. The first and longest of these clips is a song-and-dance number in which a bare-shouldered Anna shimmies to a Latin beat (fig. 2.15). In *Anna* itself (as opposed to in *Paradiso*), the dance number has a rather surprising effect in that we cut to it as Anna the nun observes her unconscious former fiancé undergoing an operation. It takes us into her flashback, which is the film's first intimation that Anna was previously a nightclub dancer. As Richard Dyer observes, 'Nothing in the film (so far)

prepares us for this transition … the emergence of this sexy, catchy number is utterly, thrillingly unexpected'.[49]

My treating *Anna* here at some length is justified by its pivotal position as the film that opens the new Paradiso. Its central melodrama – the flashbacks which have Anna the dancer trying to break free from her dysfunctional relationship with Vittorio Gassman and start afresh with good guy Raf Vallone – are framed by busy hospital scenes in which Anna the nun proves herself a dedicated and capable nurse. There is a tacit commentary in the choices of excerpt shown in *Paradiso*. Firstly, the concealment of the nun in favour of showcasing the dancer is consistent with the Paradiso's having just thrown off its own religious 'garb' as a parish cinema. Secondly, *Anna*'s melodramatic section regarding the love story of Anna the dancer (parts of which are shown in *Paradiso*) contrasts stylistically with its neorealist-inflected frame in which she is a nun. The frame scenes include a real hospital setting and naturalistic performances. The main story – or question the film has to resolve – is whether Anna will continue on, as a nun, to take holy orders or choose married life instead. Tornatore decides to use the subplot around her romantic past, rather than the neorealist-inflected hospital scenes, to quote the film (and to show how Gassman's seduction of Anna 'seduces' the new Paradiso's audience with its first on-screen kiss). This hints that these concessions to viewing pleasure exist in a certain tension with cinema's duty to its art (even if they complement it).

The screening within the diegesis of Federico Fellini's *I Vitelloni* (1953) provides an example of how the excerpted film, and the audience's reaction to it, fuse so that the world of the audience seems to extend across the screen

[49] Richard Dyer, '*Anna*', in Louis Bayman (ed.), *Directory of World Cinema. Italy* (Bristol, UK; Chicago, IL: Intellect, 2011), p. 87.

boundary. On the diegetic screen we see a young male, one of the eponymous '*vitellone* (a 'loafer, slacker …)' [50] shouting 'workers of the world…' to some roadside labourers before making a rude gesture and blowing a raspberry. The insult is composed in *I Vitelloni* itself as a moment of direct address and the Paradiso's audience responds by copying the gesture to uncertain effect. Does the audience deliver a riposte to the character whose offence appears aimed at them as well, or do they propagate it, and therefore seem to side with the young man? We view the audience's response from behind the screen and through it so that images of the man, and subsequently the labourers, are superimposed on the audience as if they might identify with either (figs. 2.16a and 2.16b). In *I Vitelloni* itself the insulted labourers exact revenge when the men's car breaks down. This outcome is fleetingly seen on the Paradiso's screen in a second superimposition, but the two shots are interrupted by the last in the series of the bespectacled man in the circle looking down and spitting on the stalls. It is at this point that the audience retaliates in the form of the soiled-nappy missile so that class warfare on screen spills over into the auditorium.

Figures 2.16a and 2.16b. First the image of a young male in *I Vitelloni* (2.16a), then that of the workers he insults (2.16b), are superimposed on the audience through the screen

[50] Bondanella, p. 144.

In *I Vitelloni* the main characters are young men trying, and often failing, to launch themselves into adulthood. The clip is followed by Toto's losing his virginity to the town prostitute on the auditorium floor. Once he has succeeded, she calls him 'vitello', a 'bull calf', which evokes Fellini's film once again as 'vitellone' is 'literally, veal from an older calf'.[51] As a 'bull calf' the 'vitellone' label doesn't apply to Toto at this stage in his life. However, the presence of Fellini's film may presage the danger of Toto's arrested development if he stayed in Giancaldo. This is raised as an issue later in the film when Alfredo encourages him to leave. Since the selected films are part of the representation of Toto's memory, it is a matter of little astonishment that the movies he remembers from his teenage years, as he undergoes his own sexual awakening, are about youth, relationships between the sexes and sex itself. Yet, as well as forming part of Toto's memories, the film selections simultaneously express the changing relationships between film and audiences; that films are increasingly geared to pleasing audiences by conjuring desirable and seductive images.

Toto's own teen romance with Elena temporarily banishes films in the film, apart from images Toto takes of Elena on his home-movie camera. From her arrival in Giancaldo, until she leaves for her summer vacation (during which time Toto has courted, and finally won her over), we don't see a single movie clip. We only hear muted sounds from *Modern Times* and see excerpts from the TV quiz screened at the Paradiso. Yet even as filmic quotations reappear during her brief absence, Toto secretes himself in the outdoor projection booth reading Elena's letters despite (an anthropomorphised) film's attempts to distract him with its parade of attractive women. Rather than watch them, he

[51] Ibid.

stands at the rewinder feverishly and rhythmically chanting Elena's name. Toto's fidelity is his crucial point of departure from the herd or the young men enjoying their on-screen counterparts' exploits as they chase the opposite sex.

The phase in the lives of Toto and the Paradiso that starts with the picture house's re-opening after the fire and ends when Toto leaves for military service, opens a gender divide that has the auditorium increasingly colonised by men attending in order to watch women. A marked change in the behaviour of one audience member iterates this. The previously somnolent blacksmith is the principal representative of the lachrymose outpouring that greets the redemption of *Chains*' heroine. He is even able to pre-empt the dialogue that will be spoken in the film. As such, this catering to male desire (reinforced by the local prostitute's appearances in three scenes during this period) reaches its climax (or nadir) when – in contemporary Giancaldo – we discover, alongside Toto, that the Paradiso ends its operational period showing pornography. When Father Adelfio declares that he won't watch pornographic films (in response to the on-screen kiss between *Anna*'s heroine and her lover) his general characterisation as reactionary might obscure what is a prescient statement.

The open-air cinema is the site at which a change in the audience's constitution is insinuated. Shots of groups of young men watching from their boats suggest that they are beginning to predominate (fig. 2.17). The first film screened at the outdoor venue is *Poor But Beautiful* (*Poveri ma belli*) (Dino Risi, 1957). The original title translates as 'poor but beautiful boys', which might be applied to the young male spectators too. The on-screen action depicts clusters of men leering at passing women. *The Girls of San Frediano* (*Le ragazze di San Frediano*) (Valerio Zurlini, 1955), is advertised on a poster at the ticket booth. Plot descriptions of this film inform us that it deals with the exploits of a

Casanova. Another film we see advertised at the open-air cinema – though not shown in the form of a clip – is *What a Woman!* (*La fortuna di essere donna*) (Alessandro Blasetti, 1956) starring Sophia Loren.

Figure 2.17. Men start to constitute the cinema audience

Elena's reunion with Toto after their summer separation coincides with a screening of *Ulysses* (*Ulisse*) (Mario Camerini, 1954), a 'proto-*peplum*' that anticipates the craze of the genre proper, the sword-and-sandal epic considered to have begun slightly later with 1958's *Hercules* (*Le fatiche di Ercole*) (Pietro Francisci).[52] Daniel O'Brien acknowledges that the peplum 'can suggest a largely reactionary cinematic form', which valorises the 'strong (white) male body' and points to the

> … fascist undercurrents of these strong bodies in a country recently ruled by the Mussolini dictatorship, which many felt celebrated the same qualities; the marginalization, domestication or demonization of femininity at a time when more women were coming into the workplace and achieving new economic and social independence.[53]

[52] Daniel O'Brien, 'Peplum', in Louis Bayman (ed.), *Directory of World Cinema. Italy* (Bristol, UK; Chicago, IL: Intellect, 2011), p. 177.
[53] Ibid., p. 178.

Ulysses' macho declarations of might, and the bare torsos of most of the film's cast (and many of the male spectators watching), replace the women who have previously graced the screen. Not only does the clip appear to assert masculine display in just the way critics ascribe to peplum as a whole, the showcasing of Kirk Douglas signals a tendency *Paradiso* ignores up to this point, which is 'the relaunch of Hollywood production in Italy' in the late 1940s and early '50s.[54] Crucially, however, *Ulysses* is an Italian-Hollywood coproduction rather than a purely Hollywood one and is an apt symbol of how the peplum, which has long roots in both Italian and American silent cinema in such productions as *Cabiria* (Giovanni Pastrone, 1914) and *Intolerance* (DW Griffith, 1916), helped Italian cinema gain a 'lucrative foothold' in the international market from the 1950s.[55] To that extent, the 'reboot' of the biblical or mythological epic has cinema's pursuit of its audience leading it back to previous proven forms and away from neorealism or its popular mutations.

The screening of *Ulysses* juxtaposes on-screen and off-screen spaces as almost continuous in content and composition, only interrupted by the frame (fig. 2.18). This suggests that the relationship between the cinema and the audience has come full circle and that popular demand has willed onto the screen representations of the audience's own mythological past. It is somewhat ironic that Elena returns from Tuscany to kiss Toto during the rainstorm that interrupts *Ulysses*, since, with its preponderance of male bodies, the film presages the military service that will shortly prove another interruption to their relationship, as well as Elena's own disappearance from Toto's life.

---

[54] Daniel O'Brien, 'Hercules versus Hercules: Variation and Continuation in Two Generations of Heroic Masculinity', in Louis Bayman and Sergio Rigoletto (eds), *Popular Italian Cinema* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 184.
[55] O'Brien, 'Peplum', p. 177.

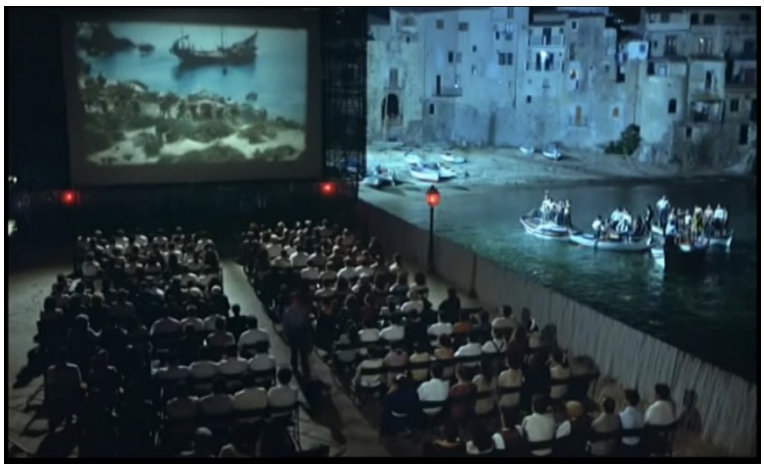


Figure 2.18. On-screen and off-screen spaces appear almost continuous

The prospect of Italian film's future international success with popular genres that will do well internationally such as peplum, is undermined by the subsequent screening of *Il Grido* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1957) back at the Paradiso. Its story supplies a bleak alternative to the Hollywood happy ending. Our views of the auditorium here reveal that for the first time it is only part-occupied. On tracking with the camera down the central aisle we find an exclusively male audience booing and gesticulating back in the direction of the projection booth as the screen displays the tail leader running through the projector and then a white emptiness, which are not only indicators of Toto's having abandoned the booth in order to chase Elena, but also seem a poignant symbol of the end of a cinematic chapter. Though we are not certain how much of the crowd's annoyance is caused by the abrupt and unpolished ending of the screening, and how much is noisy disapproval of the movie, Don Ciccio primes us to see it, at least in part, as Antonioni's misfire (which would assume the director had any particular aims regarding producing a popular film in the first place) by telling Toto that, 'It's a good film, Toto, but people here don't understand it'. Toto leaves the booth mid-screening in a scene in which the audience's own fidelity is called into question by its dwindling numbers and its

visual confirmation of the Paradiso's having been abandoned by women and a broader cross-section of the village. Don Ciccio's report to Toto is the first time audience feedback is verbalised. It indicates a new discrimination and less 'promiscuity' on their part, as if what they see (and even going to the movies at all) is now less of a given and more of a deliberate choice. In relation to the about-the-audience and for-the-audience poles represented by the old and new Paradisos respectively, *Il Grido* perhaps bucks the trend and represents the cinema's return to films about, rather than for, the audience. Yet the return seems to highlight a new instability in the audience.

While *Paradiso* highlights popular Italian cinema of the 1950s as its main subject, *Splendor*'s intradiegetic 'screenings' appear arbitrary at first. Over its course we see excerpts from a host of Italian films, and those of other European countries, including *Scipione l'africano* (Carmine Gallone, 1937), *Wild Strawberries* (*Smultronstället*) (Ingmar Bergman, 1957), *The Great War* (*La grande guerra*) (Mario Monicelli, 1959), *Il Sorpasso* (Dino Risi, 1962), *Fists in the Pocket* (*I pugni in tasca*) (Marco Bellocchio, 1965), *The Battle of Algiers* (*La battaglia di Algeri*) (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1966), *Playtime* (Jacques Tati, 1967), *Z* (Costa-Gavras, 1969), *Day for Night* (*La nuit américaine*) (François Truffaut, 1973) and *Amarcord* (Federico Fellini, 1973). Although many posters of Hollywood movies appear, only one film is shown on screen: *It's a Wonderful Life* (Frank Capra, 1946). On the surface, little seems to link the films listed above except that most received critical acclaim upon release or have achieved it since. However, elsewhere in the film, much is made of cinema owner Jordan's left-wing leanings, particularly as it is revealed that he spent two years fighting under Marshal Tito with the Yugoslav partisans. It is clear his politics are well known locally when the priest denounces him from the pulpit as a

'Bolshevik' and forbids his congregation from attending the Splendor, particularly because of the presence of its sexually alluring usherette. When the usherette is first introduced to the Splendor in 1960, a retrospective of Italian neorealism is being screened. Later, at projectionist Luigi's instigation, the cinema holds a retrospective of Soviet films, which only attracts nine patrons and plunges Jordan into debt. In a turn of events which is even more ironic, Jordan entertains the idea of giving the Splendor's auditorium over to an evening of striptease in order to help save it from bankruptcy. As he watches a group of strippers audition, though the event has already been advertised Luigi's silently questioning presence persuades him to abandon it since it will compromise 'fifty years of professionalism'. The angry crowd of men who gather expectantly aren't appeased by the news that the show has been replaced by a film. The screening substituting the strip show is *The Tree of Wooden Clogs* (*L'albero degli zoccoli*) (Ermanno Olmi, 1978), which is a historical Italian film in the neorealist style about the fragility of the peasant farmer's existence. In its contrast to the planned strip show, this screening is perhaps a ludicrously extreme reaffirmation of Jordan's political principles.

Splendor is explicit in delineating or positing cinema itself as political terrain through the films it 'screens' within it and their cumulative iteration of left-wing or, at least, social-critical values. In contrast, *Paradiso* not only partially obscures its politics behind a nostalgic veneer, it diverges from *Splendor* in another important respect. The New Paradiso (the actual post-fire commercial cinema depicted) is a synecdoche of 1950s Italian cinema itself. Its audience is likewise an iteration of small-town Italian (and Sicilian) society in microcosm. *Paradiso* is, therefore, interested in the interaction between cinema and society at a particular historical moment. It posits cinema as somehow having a

bearing on how and why society changes. *Splendor* might see cinema's screen as a repository for certain political ideals and their expression but there is little suggestion of cinema as either 'taking the temperature' of contemporary social conditions or changing with them.

Cinema Paradiso, *Amarcord* and the cinema audience

Clips from numerous films upon which Fellini worked in his early career are played within *Paradiso* including, as we have seen, *I Vitelloni*, his third directorial effort. There are others quoted for which he is credited as a writer including: *Return of the Black Eagle*, *In the Name of the Law*, *The Mill on the Po* and *The Path of Hope* (*Il cammino della speranza*) (Pietro Germi, 1950). Fellini's *Amarcord* was made in 1973 and doesn't fit with the chronology *Paradiso* represents. However, it is an intertext in several key respects. According to Bondanella,

> Tornatore depicts the crowds inside the theater in the same grotesque, comic style made famous by similar portraits of film audiences in *Fellini's Roma*, *The Clowns*, and *Amarcord* … A number of memorable characters in *Cinema Paradiso* constantly remind the viewer of Italian cinematic tradition, such as the parish priest …[56]

Amarcord's title, which means '"I remember" in the local dialect of Fellini's youth',[57] could have been *Paradiso*'s. Like *Paradiso*, *Amarcord* is understood as an autobiographical look back at childhood and adolescence. It is set in 1930s' fascist Italy and depicts the run-up to the second world war whereas *Paradiso* describes the aftermath. In a 1980 interview, Fellini

[56] Bondanella, p. 539.
[57] James Hay, *Popular Film Culture in Fascist Italy: The Passing of the Rex* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. xv.

describes *Amarcord* as portraying 'the closed ethos of a boy who knew nothing of the world outside of his small Italian coastside village during the 1930s'.[58] What applies to *Amarcord*'s young protagonist, Titta (Bruno Zanin), in fascist Italy, describes Toto's position in postwar Sicily. Between them *Amarcord* and *Paradiso* depict the role and influence of cinema on small-town life on both sides of the war. *Amarcord* was made forty years after the period it examines. Likewise, *Paradiso* is separated from the era in which it is interested by a similar interval.

Although there are two scenes in *Amarcord* which take us inside the picture house, Hollywood's influence over the characters' lives is mainly articulated through dialogue about stars. *Amarcord*'s townspeople use Hollywood figures and images as a means to relate to each other. For example, the proprietor of the local cinema is nicknamed Ronald Colman and the local siren, who is compared to Garbo, looks for her 'Gary Cooper'. *Amacord*'s picture house is located, like the Paradiso, in the central square. It displays prominent advertisements and graphic illustrations of American stars. A striking example is a life-size cut-out of Laurel and Hardy, whose presence we note for the first time from the point of view of mourners passing by the cinema in a funeral procession. A similar representational strategy is adopted in *Paradiso* in which Hollywood largely takes the form of publicity materials in the projection booth itself (as well as in the auditorium and, as in *Amarcord*, at the cinema entrance). Alfredo's habit of delivering lines of dialogue from Hollywood productions such as *Fury* (Fritz Lang, 1936), associates him with the characters in *Amarcord*.

[58] Corrado Augias, 'Ho Inventato Tutto. Anche Me: Conversazione con Federico Fellini', *Panorama* (14 January 1980), p. 95; quoted in ibid., p. xi.

The criticism *Paradiso* initially attracted for ignoring politics and history[59] echoes that levelled at Fellini as 'Throughout most of his career, Fellini was attacked by leftist critics for his lack of any social vision or political perspective'.[60] In both cases, critics revise these opinions on closer analysis. According to James Hay, 'As a cultural exploration, *Amarcord* dramatizes the American cinema's subtle yet pervasive effect on the sensibilities of a relatively provincial Italian movie public'.[61] Fellini is interested in how 'the spirit of American cinema … did much to *validate* or impel political and social action' under fascism.[62] In other words, both films are instructive about reading beyond the surface of a film and being vigilant to the elements and meanings that are present, even if the dominant rhetoric of the images seem to deny their politics. In that regard, they don't just tell stories about the audience but they are also about how we view film in that they demand that we penetrate the surface to discover their politics. *Paradiso*, like many films that allude to forerunners (rather than quoting them), divides its audience between those who enjoy the film at face value and those who detect such an intertext. As well as being about audiences, both *Paradiso* and *Amarcord* have been beloved by them. Indeed, *Amarcord* is the last of Fellini's films to be popular at the Italian box office.[63] *Paradiso* is an homage to *Amarcord* in that it, too, is both about, and for, the cinema audience.

---

[59] See, for example, Tom Milne, '*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* (*Cinema Paradiso*)', *Monthly Film Bulletin* 57 (March 1990), pp. 72-3.
[60] Bondanella, p. 299.
[61] Hay, p. 64.
[62] Ibid., p. 65. The emphasis is Hay's.
[63] Bondanella, p. 299.

Conclusion

In both *Coming Up Roses* and *Cinema Paradiso*, the diegetic audience is constituted of a set of minor characters. The fact that they are characters, as opposed to anonymous extras, means the stakes involved in their attending the cinema are clearer. One of this chapter's findings is that the precarity of exhibition is expressed partly through the collective audience's being loudly and prominently present and participative. Subsequently, the fragmentation of the audience is as important as, if not more important than, its declining numbers. In other words, when the cinema appears to draw patrons from one social class, one or two age groups (for example, the very young or old) or one gender, such colonisation or ghettoisation indicates the dwindling popularity of the establishment in question and of cinemagoing as a social practice.

I have attempted to show that the films in films are often figurative of the depicted audiences' circumstances. Moreover, the collective audience's response to films extends the notion first articulated in the previous chapter about the porousness of the screen boundary and the two-way interaction between film and audience that public exhibition facilitates. Furthermore, it emerges in this chapter that the distinction between films about the audience and those for them is a useful angle from which to regard the portrayal of film reception. The division highlights different ways in which a film addresses a spectator (by trying to speak to her or him about a familiar situation or, alternatively, by reflecting her or his predilections). By extension it also points up differentiated modes of reception. The portrayal of the collective audience reiterates one of the functions of the rube; to illuminate that not all have the capacity to recognise or appreciate it when they are being addressed, and their

engagement sought, by films that attempt represent their struggles and situations.

In emphasising specifics of place and time in their depiction of film exhibition and reception, this chapter's films highlight that cinema doesn't exist in a vacuum. The situations and contexts in which it is produced and exhibited are also constructive. As described above, in *Cinema Paradiso*, the *Chains* episode doesn't invite reflection upon film form per se but does illustrate that form (in this case Italian films' two-act structure) is moulded by the film's context of production and exhibition.

In the films studied in the present chapter, women commonly provide a means by which the projectionist achieves fulfilment beyond his profession. In *The Smallest Show on Earth* and *Coming Up Roses* the woman functions as a kind of bridge between the projectionist and the world of the audience. This seems to start with the projectionist's rediscovering romance in cinema itself. In *Cinema Paradiso*, Elena is a kind of metaphor for cinema in that she inspires a similar level of total and exclusive devotion in Toto. Alfredo's view is that Toto's continuing his relationship with her would endanger his filmmaking future. In this regard, the projectionist's fulfilment of his romantic destiny is his entry into an alternative sphere of life analogous to his commitment to cinema. However, Elena cannot function as a metaphor for cinema's all-consuming nature if Toto is allowed both to possess her and to fulfil his artistic ambitions.

This, in turn, throws into relief that cinema itself is a world in which one might become immersed. In *Cinema Paradiso*, the parish cinema, and the way it mixes religious and Hollywood icons, points to cinema as an alternative sphere of life like that of the church or a religious faith. As such it is a sphere that is both in the world but is symbolic of it or analogous to it. It offers an

imagistic order as an alternative to the mundane. Like the priest, the projectionist has a foot in both the realms of the divine (that of cinema) and the secular.

In *Cinema Paradiso* human capacities of vision and prophesy converge in Alfredo's projectionist. His warnings against nostalgia might be extended to cinema itself: that it should free itself from the past and break new ground. The film portrays cinema as the sphere in which social progress, or a paradise or utopia of some kind, might be imagined. The projectionist is the figure on the threshold of both cinema's paradise and the audience's earth. He is the figure through which one can explore the points of intersection between the medium and the worlds it imagines as possible, those it represents and those in which it exists.

Chapter three
“This theatre is haunted by ghosts”: *Kings of the Road* and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*

The films studied here, *Kings of the Road* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*) (Wim Wenders, 1976) and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (*Bu san*) (Tsai Ming-liang, 2003), are themed around the audience’s retreat from cinema. This is a concern shared by the films analysed in the previous chapter. However, in both *Kings of the Road* and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*, the audience is sparse throughout the film and the collective is only fleetingly seen. As we join their narratives, the depicted cinemas are already on the brink of closure and there are no campaigns to save them in the offing. Reflecting the death-of-cinema themes of their films, the projectionist-protagonists also distinguish themselves from those of previous chapters by scarcely being shown either projecting or watching a film.

As was the case in chapter two, the case studies here represent distinct eras and geographical contexts. Likewise, they are usually dealt with in relation to the respective national cinemas to which they belong. In addition, they are part of new waves or movements which aim to revitalise those national cinemas. With works like *Kings of the Road*, Wenders played a significant role in New German Cinema and Tsai is a celebrated second new wave director of Taiwanese cinema. Both directors are associated with an auteurist mode of filmmaking in which the film is understood to express an artist’s personal creative vision. Furthermore, a thematic rationale for examining Wenders’ and Tsai’s works together is their deployment of the concept of haunting in their portrayals of the death of cinemagoing. As we will see, the projectionist’s

presence, and that of the audience, are barometers of the cinema's demise in both cases.

The previous chapters explore the projectionist as a film- or image-maker and intermediary between the film and the audience in positive terms. However, in this chapter's films the extent to which the projectionist is a filmmaker is a debate conducted along negative lines insofar as the specific questions one asks are: what are the implications of *Kings of the Road*'s projectionist's reluctance to show films or to what extent does he collaborate in killing cinema off? With regards to *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*, the issues relate to the implications of the projectionist's never being seen as co-present with the screening of a film and to the question of what it means that he is constructed, in large part, by his semi-presence or absence from the narrative until a very late stage.

A fundamental question with which this chapter deals is the absence of the mass audience. It has greatly reduced in numbers but has also become increasingly fragmented and particularised so that in each film cinemagoing seems to have become the preserve of the lone man. *Cinema Paradiso* (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*) (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988) similarly depicts its eponymous theatre's ending up as a porn cinema prior to demolition, a trajectory that begins with its rebirth as a commercial concern when the parish cinema burns down. In all cases, it seems that the cohort of men who persist in assembling at the cinema represent the last vestiges and most recalcitrant faction of the audience that used to exist. Though the projectionist is frequently absent in a variety of ways in the two films, male recalcitrance might also account for the fact that his presence continues to be the main issue at stake.

Apart from *The Projectionist* (Harry Hurwitz, 1971), which is analysed in the first chapter, the two films discussed here are the most overtly experimental with film form considered in this thesis. Consequently, both make substantial demands on audiences and are less concerned than, for example, *Cinema Paradiso* with producing a film that typifies the classic Hollywood style and yields its attendant pleasures and the absorption of its audience. I will argue that both *Kings of the Road* and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* write a cinematic prescription for advancing the medium as progressive art. Moreover, this is prioritised in the films above providing the audience with a pleasurable or immersive viewing experience. In other words, the films create an almost antagonistic set of relations between film and audience that invites us to examine, once again, the changing roles of cinema and cinemagoing and its persistence.

Kings of the Road: the projectionist as patron and cineaste

Kings of the Road was released in the year in which West German cinemagoing fell to a record low.[1] In the film Bruno Winter (Rüdiger Vogler) is a projectionist who travels the length of the border with East Germany, getting work servicing and repairing projectors where he can, and occasionally projecting the film at show time in the absence of others to do it. His itinerancy highlights the widespread nature of the plight of rural or marginal cinemas that struggle to remain viable. Wenders relates that while travelling, in the course of making

[1] Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema: A History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1989), p. 36.

Wrong Move (*Falsche Bewegung*) (1975), the film he produced prior to *Kings*, he became 'aware of the situation of the rural movie theaters…fascinated by the theater interiors, the projection rooms, and the projectionists'.[2] Several years before that, Wenders gave an account, in the short piece 'Despising What You Sell', of his experience of United Artists' dealings with suburban movie theatre owners from having briefly worked in the American distributor's Düsseldorf office.[3] In it one can read, in his disgusted tones, about the disparity in treatment between the owners of chains and city-centre theatres and those of smaller concerns forced to beg for the films they needed – which were mostly unforthcoming – to stay in business. By referring to the immediate problems of suburban picture houses, *Kings* also raises issues concerning the state of the wider West German film industry. It was structured so that American distributors forced smaller cinemas to subsist on a diet of poor-quality home-grown product rather than allowing them to rent better films that might draw patrons to their cinemas.

In other words, as a piece of New German Cinema which was made and distributed outside of the established system, *Kings* criticises several cinema-related problems including the control of American distributors and their unfair business practices (although he avoids naming the problem in explicit terms). That distribution was in American hands also made it difficult for the likes of Wenders and other auteurs of New German Cinema to have their films exhibited publicly. Wenders was one of the founder members of Filmverlag der Autoren, which was established to fund and distribute New German Cinema.

---

[2] Wim Wenders, 'Impossible Stories', in Roger F Cook and Gerd Gemünden (eds), *The Cinema of Wim Wenders: Image, Narrative, and the Postmodern Condition* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997), p. 38.
[3] Wim Wenders, *Emotion Pictures: Reflections on the Cinema* (London: Faber, 1989), pp. 36-7.

One of his films was the first to be handled by the company.[4] Until New German Cinema, very few films of quality had been produced since the 1930s because of the Third Reich, second world war and its aftermath. It is therefore unsurprising that previous scholarship on *Kings* focuses on issues pertaining to Wenders' authorship, career trajectory and the wider concerns of New German Cinema. With its specific analysis of the projectionist's roles and representations in *Kings*, my work excavates many of the same issues from a different starting point. I also bring *Kings* into dialogue with a new set of films and national cinemas. This helps to throw West German problems more strongly into relief but also suggests that cinema's concerns transcend national boundaries.

Kings is unusual, in comparison with other films in the corpus, in including a scene in which the projectionist character attends the cinema as a patron, rather than to work. Bruno's non-working visit to a cinema represents *Kings*' solitary staging of a cinema screening. The dearth of screenings shown in the film is consistent with one of its wider themes: the audience's flight from the cinema. Bruno attends the picture house in pursuit of Pauline (Lisa Kreuzer), a woman he meets at a fairground. Learning that she will be at the cinema, though not knowing that she is there in the line of duty, he appears as a hopeful suitor, only to find her stationed at her post as ticket clerk. This discovery transforms him into one of the lone males trickling in to see the pornographic movie. It is perhaps in order to repudiate his identification with this constituency, as well as to make clear to her that his purpose in being there is to court her, that he buys two tickets rather than one.[5]

---

[4] Wim Wenders, 'Filmverlag der Autoren Edition', *Filmverlag der Autoren Edition*, (n. d.) <http://www.filmverlagderautoren.de/material/FDA_Vorwort.pdf>, accessed 19 April 2018.
[5] The second ticket or seat perhaps guarantees a degree of space and privacy, and this could be its practical purpose.

As we will see, this cinema visit, which is extended over several scenes and occurs in the centre of the film, explores two positions, which, as projectionist, Bruno adopts: that of viewer and that of 'filmmaker'. As he makes his way towards the booth, he passes Wenders in a cameo role as a member of the audience. Wenders inhabits the section of the theatre in which Bruno himself will later sit when he and Pauline watch a short film on a loop (fig. 3.1). Wenders' appearing here identifies him with Bruno and hints that Bruno is a kind of directorial alter ego, which strengthens the notion of the viewer-projectionist as filmmaker. As we will see, this cinema visit triggers a dawning realisation in Bruno of the unsustainability of his situation as freelance projectionist.

Frame enlargements from *Kings of the Road* (figs. 3.1-3.5).
Figure 3.1. Wim Wenders is seated in the auditorium as Bruno makes his way to the projection booth

Though Bruno initially resists entering the booth, he is ineluctably drawn into correcting the faulty projection he discovers while a viewer in the auditorium. His quest to find the projectionist is answered in his discovery of someone presented in a long shot of a torso, legs and a penis being massaged (the person's head being obscured by machinery) while a pool of unspooled celluloid gathers on the floor. His enquiry reveals that this projectionist has

configured the apparatus so as to turn the booth into a private peep show. Bruno's approaching the projection booth differs from, but is nonetheless an allusion to, a scene in Jean-Luc Godard's *Masculin-Féminin* (1966) in which Paul (Jean-Pierre Léaud) observes that the film he is watching is being projected in the wrong aspect ratio. With none of Bruno's reticence, Paul ascends the projection booth at a run and when he arrives he proceeds to read to the projectionist from some kind of manual or set of instructions regarding the correct aspect ratio (which should be the American widescreen 1:1.85). The protagonists' approaches to the projection booth in both Godard's and Wenders' movies foreground alternative ways in which the film image might be regarded. Paul and Bruno see the image's form and presentation rather than its content.

Both Paul and Bruno are impelled to the booth by the notion that the image in toto is compromised by poor presentation. However, in the context of *Kings* the pornographic film may provide an anomaly. The specific faults with the image that Bruno mentions to Pauline – that it is out of focus, dark in the middle and badly framed – describe a view of the pornographic image that might be imagined as replicating an audience member's own compromised sight of it, given the sexual activities in which he might simultaneously be engaged while watching. A thus degraded image, in terms of its presentation, is perhaps not unconducive to such a patron's purposes. In this respect, Bruno's complaint might even be felt incongruous and his anger misdirected.[6]

[6] In Wim Wenders' 1977 essay, 'Crazy about Films: The Work of the Projectionist Ladwig', he describes how the projectionist was held to account for myriad complaints from a film-festival crowd and his unstinting care in spite of this; that projection was a hobby as well as a job, and that he was 'a real fanatic'. Bruno retains some of these characteristics but we assume that the attention Ladwig lavished on the festival films is more in proportion with their merits than the care Bruno takes on behalf of the cinema owners he services. The essay is in Wenders, *Emotion Pictures*, pp. 100-3.

The relief projectionist's interference with the image reiterates the trope of the projectionist's dual positions as viewer and filmmaker. In this case, he creates a private, reduced screening for himself by corrupting the image and commandeering a portion of it at the expense of those who pay to see the whole. The audience's view is thus also reduced. The excuse he offers in mitigation, that he renders his services for nothing and is thereby entitled to exploit his position, echoes the distributors' attitudes towards the effects of their practices on small theatres. They aimed to maximise financial gain rather than to provide good quality films, which was a situation summed up thus, '…it was … more profitable to distribute porno films or American films … or, better yet, American porno films, the favorite item on almost every German distribution circuit.'.[7]

The subsequent part of this episode at Pauline's cinema, in which Bruno creates and shows her a film, shifts the focus from the form of the pornographic image to its content. Bruno's exhibition of the looping film is an enigmatic scene as it represents an unanticipated change in mood. Previous events suggest that Bruno is keen to woo Pauline, and his flirtatious glances at her, followed by his declaration that he will put on a film for her, promise a more romantic denouement. Yet Bruno's proceeding to show a pornographic film seems not only calculated to annihilate romance but to be a slightly malicious act. As a seeming excerpt from a trailer rather than a movie proper, which is played in a loop so that the voiceover narration and images recur, this is, once again, a reduced screening. This extends to the ways in which Bruno and Pauline watch it. They are seated near the projection booth on a balcony above the main part

[7] Timothy Corrigan, *New German Film: The Displaced Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 3.

of the auditorium and to the side of the screen, so their view is oblique. They are the sole inhabitants of the auditorium and they don't sit next to one another, as a courting couple usually would, but on consecutive rows (fig. 3.2). The effect of their respective positioning in the auditorium is almost to make them behave as though they were the punters of a porn movie.

Figure 3.2. Pauline and Bruno sit separately in the auditorium

Throughout the scenes that unfold in the cinema, the desires Bruno and Pauline have for each other seem only occasionally and briefly to coincide. Pauline is initially reluctant. There is a moment in which she is alone in the ticket booth when she stares at the space before her and shakes her head as if to express the thought that his pursuit of her is already a lost cause. Later, while the looping trailer plays, she recounts a story involving a couple who had attempted sexual intercourse in the cinema but who had become stuck as the result of the woman's vaginal muscles cramping. The telling of this tale seems designed to dispel, rather than to encourage, romance. Moreover, she reports the incident, which otherwise might have been a funny anecdote with which to regale Bruno, in a forlorn way, which tacitly acknowledges the sour note the pornography has introduced to their date.

Neither comments on the ‘movie’ Bruno has made. It is too brief and repetitive to be interesting for long, despite its promise – via the voiceover – of ‘Brutality! Action! Sex!’. At one stage Bruno closes his eyes as though he can’t bear to look at it, and as he sits in front of Pauline he is mostly facing away from her too. Their exchanges are less a conversation than a series of melancholy observations. Pauline has the final word when she informs Bruno that she lives alone with her daughter and intends that things should stay that way. The coldness between them indicates that romance has stalled. Bruno’s action in showing pornography seems to express disappointment or disapproval regarding the nature of the cinema’s offering. It highlights that pornography precludes the site as one of courtship. The anecdote Pauline recounts suggests that she understands this.

The episode as a whole confronts Bruno with two counterparts: the relief ‘projectionist’ and Pauline. Bruno has in common with both that he isn’t formally employed by cinemas but nonetheless participates in keeping them running. Though it is clear in this scene that Bruno cares about exhibition standards, and thus has purer motives than his masturbating counterpart, he colludes with the latter’s activities to the extent of usurping him. While he doesn’t seek sexual gratification, which is reflected in his failure with Pauline, he does normally make his living from such cinemas. From the perspective of ethics, there would seem to be little to separate him from the ‘projectionist’ he expels. Bruno’s desisting in his pursuit of Pauline signals his beginning to perceive the moral difficulties attending his work. He is repulsed by the movies offered in the places he seeks employment. If his position in the audience is repugnant to him, his occupation of the projection booth, on whatever intermittent basis, starts to become equally intolerable.

The only other scene that depicts a cinema auditorium is one in which the 'screening' takes the form of a shadow-play. This play is improvised for a group of school children on a visit to the cinema by Bruno and Robert (Hanns Zischler). Bruno invites Robert to travel with him after witnessing him attempt suicide. The scene starts with a teacher remonstrating with Bruno about the delay in the showing of the film they are there to see. The screening must wait while Bruno repairs a broken speaker, which makes the restless children boo and complain. When they call out, clap and laugh loudly at the spontaneous shadow-play, they continue to form a noisy, responsive audience.

The show Bruno and Robert create behind the screen is a wordless one that consists in them acting as a slapstick comedy duo who play tricks on one another and otherwise interact in funny ways. Together with the broken speaker, the 'silent comedy' recalls part of a conversation Bruno has with an older male cinema owner in a scene which functions as *Kings*' prologue. The owner recalls the audience booing when early sound films, which relied on the synchronisation of film reels with sound discs, lost synchronisation. He paints a picture of the popularity of early cinema, which contrasts sharply with the contemporary situation in which most cinemas have closed down. The broken speaker in itself hints at the neglected state of contemporary exhibition sites in which key equipment doesn't work. Yet the portrayal of the children's response to slapstick comedy proffers them as a potential audience for a cinema that responded to their needs. The broken speaker links the shadow-play scene with the owner's memories of the hazards of early sound cinema. However, as well as alluding in multiple ways to cinema's formerly being beloved by audiences, the shadow-play also places Bruno on the side of film production. In this episode he is also in a less problematic position in moral terms than at

Pauline's establishment in that he acts in the interests of the audience and of cinema.

After it is made evident in the prologue that Bruno is a projectionist, he is introduced in the main narrative as a spectator. His first sight of Robert is when he watches his suicide attempt through the windscreen of his truck. The scene yields the first instance of Bruno's closing his eyes while watching, as if to withdraw his gaze from something unpalatable – an action he performs twice in Pauline's presence. After Robert's car plunges into the water, he shields his face as though from a tragic or gruesome scene. This quickly gives way to childlike giggling in which he covers his broad smile with his hand and seems to scrunch himself into a delighted ball of laughter. The successive reactions heighten his portrayal as engaged in watching a 'show'. Approaching Bruno from the river after his suicide bid, Robert cuts the kind of soaked and dripping figure to which we are more accustomed from slapstick and his wry, deadpan, expression has shades of Buster Keaton (figs. 3.3a and 3.3b). The scant dialogue makes it a largely silent scene. In its subtle way, this first scene creates another 'silent movie' with Bruno as the 'audience', following the prologue's emphasis on the popularity of early cinema.

Figures 3.3a and 3.3b. Bruno watches Robert's plunge into the river (3.3a). Robert emerges in the manner of a slapstick clown (3.3b)

Kings only depicts two film-exhibition situations and, in each case, exploits them for comedic purposes. The first occasion involves the masturbating stand-in projectionist as described above. The second ends with Bruno and Robert absconding from a screening when there are three reels – or around an hour of the movie – left to project. The film-projection scenarios described are the only ones in which excerpts from, or depictions of, films extant in the real world outside of *Kings* appear. Stills and star portraits from West German cinema between the second world war and the mid-1970s are displayed on the walls of some of the booths Bruno visits, and Pauline's ticket booth is festooned with them (fig. 3.4a). The clips we see fleetingly at Pauline's cinema – the reflected image the relief projectionist watches, and the clip from the pornographic trailer – are likewise the only ones that appear throughout *Kings*. In the episode in which Bruno and Robert abandon the screening partway through because they cannot bear to watch any longer, larger posters feature. Robert is shown reading them, and the protagonists converse while positioned beside them so that we are encouraged to notice them (fig. 3.4b). The inference encouraged is that the film from which they flee is one of those advertised. The posters depict a low-brow 1950s' comedy, a sex comedy and a horror.[8] A reference to Bavarians in the title of one, and the use of German dialect words in that of another, makes them seem especially parochial. That only West German films are explicitly incorporated in this way is consistent with *Kings*' representation of rural exhibitors and of the major problem they face: that the policies of American-controlled distributors mean they cannot rent or show

[8] In *Two Bavarians in the Jungle* (*Zwei Bayern im Urwald*) (Ludwig Bender, 1957) the Bavarians travel to the African jungle to brew beer. *Bottoms Up* (*Auf der Alm da gibt's koa Sünd*) (Franz Josef Gottlieb, 1974) has a scientist steal a formula for turning manure into fuel pursued by many people who have a great deal of sex with each other and the title of *Magdalena, Possessed by the Devil* (*Magdalena, vom Teufel Besessen*) (Walter Boos, 1974) is self-explanatory. Their plot descriptions don't suggest the films are of high quality.

better quality films or those made elsewhere. Hollywood and other cinemas are absent.

Figures 3.4a and 3.4b. West German films quoted via publicity images in the ticket booth (3.4a). Robert lingers over the film fare offered in rural cinemas (3.4b)

The episode with the masturbating stand-in captures Bruno's embodiment of what critics call 'Hawksian professionalism',[9] which describes the portrayal of the male protagonists of Howard Hawks' films as preoccupied with accomplishing a job. Accordingly, Bruno expels the stand-in and takes his place. His professionalism has the effect of partially masking the peculiarity, if not the absurdity, of his situation. Instances of his exhibiting film to the public in a cinema don't occur in the normal course of his work but as the result of unforeseen events. They entail him going beyond the call of duty. On the second occasion he agrees to project for an audience he says, 'I got talked in to showing the film tonight' and that, 'I'm too good-natured'. Rather than extending to showing film, his professionalism almost precludes it. Bruno's abandonment of the screening signals his code of professionalism starting to break down. By leaving the film partway through, Bruno's negative 'intervention' means it tails off and isn't completed. This perpetuates a motif of exhaustion which is present elsewhere in *Kings*. Roads simply come to a dead end at the border in a region that includes towns with names that cause Robert

[9] Noël Carroll, *Interpreting the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 251.

to remark upon them: Machtlos, Friedlos and Toter Mann (Powerless, Peaceless and Dead Man).

Bruno's largely omitting to project films limits the ways in which we might see the projectionist as a filmmaker in *Kings*' narrative except in ways that are negative. When Bruno prematurely abandons his temporary projectionist's posting, he simultaneously leaves an incomplete film. In one respect this repeats the action of the stand-in projectionist at Pauline's cinema in that the latter commandeers a portion of the image for his own use, which makes it incomplete for the watching audience. Yet Bruno's rectification of the latter situation makes no difference to the poor subject matter of the images. In other words, even his professionalism cannot restore film images of any worth. In that regard, his presence barely matters in terms of ameliorating a dire situation. Bruno's own reluctance to show films signals his disassociating himself from West German film and its audiences. The prologue's inclusion intimates that *Kings* chronicles an internal shift of attitude within Bruno. As a standalone scene, it implies that both he and the cinema owner are intent on keeping local exhibition going. As *Kings* progresses, this emerges as a questionable aim. The projectionist is, therefore, a reluctant 'filmmaker' in *Kings*, and the degree of his cooperation with the status quo, with the existing apparatus and the complicated historical legacy behind it, is at issue throughout. A heightening of the sense of the contemporary crisis results. Meanwhile *Kings*, as a West German road movie which highlights such problems, emerges as inhabiting a position of moral integrity between its repudiation of the damaging, profit-driven practices of the contemporary film industry and its participation in making a new form of West German film.

A frequent strategy deployed in *Kings*, in order to draw attention to the film image as an object of scrutiny, is that of alluding to other films and filmmakers. Viewers, critics and scholars have observed numerous allusions to the French New Wave, to Hollywood and to other cinemas. As far as the French New Wave is concerned, I argue above that *Kings* refers to Godard's *Masculin-Féminin*. Another allusion to a film by Godard occurs when Bruno reads aloud from William Faulkner's *The Wild Palms* after both he and Robert have bedded down for the night. This recalls a scene from *Breathless* (*À bout de souffle*) (1960), which takes place in a hotel room, in which Patricia (Jean Seberg) asks Michel (Jean-Paul Belmondo) whether he has read the book and quotes a line from it. In alluding to *Breathless*, *Kings* alludes to a filmic work by someone engaged in criticism of cinema by means of both film and writing.

The *nouvelle vague* and classical Hollywood cinema converge in figures like Godard and other contributing critics to *Cahiers du cinéma*. One finds that *Kings*' many allusions or moments of homage reflect *Cahiers*' interest in Hollywood and certain of its auteurs. For example, when Bruno finds a tin containing a treasure trove of what looks like little comic books horded by his younger self secreted under the doorstep of his childhood home, it recalls a homecoming scene in Nicholas Ray's *The Lusty Men* (1952) in which Robert Mitchum's hero crawls underneath his family ranch to a hiding place where he finds a tobacco tin containing an old rodeo programme, a toy gun and a pair of nickels. Apart from such allusions to specific moments in Hollywood films, *Kings* takes on certain aspects, atmospheres or properties of directors' works that are more difficult to pinpoint such as the "…love story between two men" that constitutes several of Howard Hawks' films[10] or what Noël Carroll calls

[10] Robin Wood, *Howard Hawks* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), p. 107.

'Langian paranoia', which is 'an important referent of [American] films of the seventies and eighties'.

> The notion of Langian paranoia, as galvanized by recent film discourse, has a certain specificity. It does not apply to just any thriller/crime film with a conspiracy in it, but only to conspiracies that are virtually all-encompassing while also appearing innocent and ordinary. The Langian myth, as conceived in film discourse, is that of a vast, almost undetectable evil scheme disguised by an illusory patina of things-as-usual. The hero is alone in seeing through the veil of everydayness and is pitted against something or someone of the demonic proportions of a Mabuse.[11]

According to the above description, 'Langian paranoia' seems to characterise the attitude of the cinema owner (Franziska Stömmer) who appears in the final scenes of the film and refers, indirectly, to the hostile practices of the American distributors and their effects on small exhibitors. Indeed, as she refers to the situation, a portrait of Lang is often in shot, hanging on the wall of the projection booth above where she sits (fig. 3.5b). Like Lang in his portrait, she sports a striped shirt in visual tribute. A shot occurs earlier in the same scene in which Bruno and she are framed together with Lang's portrait to her right and an image of Brigitte Bardot to his (fig. 3.5c). This creates a momentary allusion to *Contempt* (*Le mépris*) (1963), in which both Lang and Bardot star, which is another film by Godard. In fact, this is a second reference to *Contempt*. Earlier in the film Robert takes a clipping of an image of Lang from a magazine he finds in Bruno's truck. It is a still from the movie.[12] As a mood or atmosphere, Langian paranoia is perhaps the result of the contempt to which the owner alludes: the distributors' attitudes towards rural exhibitors and the film industry's attitude towards cinema and audiences.

---

[11] Carroll, p. 252.
[12] Wenders, *Emotion Pictures*, p. 107.

Figures 3.5a, 3.5b and 3.5c. Brigitte Bardot's image by Bruno (3.5a) and Fritz Lang's by the owner (3.5b)

A wider shot alludes to *Contempt* by bringing the portraits together (3.5c)

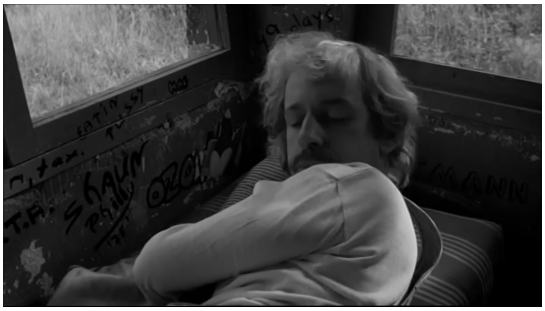
Devin Orgeron's volume on the road movie traces a link between – among other films – John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956), *Breathless*, Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* (1969) and *Kings*.[13] The thread itself attests to the influence of both classical Hollywood and the French New Wave on countercultural cinema such as New Hollywood and New German Cinema. Moreover, the road movie is a point where cinematic heritage converges with cinematic revolution or innovation. It is a vehicle for the critique of both cinema and of culture and society. Moreover, its American origins mean it isn't only a privileged means of scrutinising America, but also of the superpower's influence elsewhere such as in Europe.

[13] Devin Orgeron, *Road Movies: From Muybridge and Méliès to Lynch and Kiarostami* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Kings' complex and dichotomous critique of American cultural and countercultural influence is epitomised by its homage to *Easy Rider*. The protagonists' diversion to the Rhine is an episode in which playful use of Hopper's movie is made. Rather than taking itself too seriously in its imitation, *Kings* puts Robert in a sidecar rather than on a chopper and gives the protagonists what look like children's sunglasses rather than Peter Fonda's Ray Bans. In a later scene, the abandoned military cabin in which Bruno and Robert spend a night before parting company would also seem to allude to *Easy Rider* (figs. 3.6a and 3.6b). The cabin is visually similar, especially because of its graffiti-daubed walls and camp beds, to the jail cell into which *Easy Rider*'s protagonists are thrown after being arrested. The camera lingers over graffiti in the respective scenes in both *Kings*' military station and *Easy Rider*'s cell. Bruno's and Robert's pausing over, and trying to decipher, these hieroglyphics pays a subtler tribute to another example of New Hollywood filmmaking, George Lucas' *American Graffiti* (1973), an unusual kind of 'road movie' in which teenagers drive round and round the streets – making no ostensible linear progress – to an almost continual soundtrack of early 1960s' rock 'n' roll emanating from car radios, drive-ins and high school dances. Bruno's jukebox, record player and the protagonists' singing rock 'n' roll and their quoting the lyrics of Bob Dylan all show how steeped they are in both American culture and, paradoxically, its counterculture.

Bruno's expertise regarding the presentation of the image is analogous with the same critical spectatorial stance for which *Kings* advocates in a variety of obvious and subtle ways through its allusions to the *Cahiers* critics, the French New Wave and New Hollywood. The intertexts *Kings* incorporates suggest that it isn't only interested in celebrating cinema, but in film as

cinematic *écriture* and as a means of cultural and societal critique. *Kings*' projectionist and its projection-related themes thus grant us access to its intertextuality which, in turn, enables us to perceive filmmaking as an act of critical spectatorship. Film as a form of criticism is another way in which the projectionist's own dualism as filmmaker and viewer is iterated.

Figures 3.6a and 3.6b. Frame enlargement from the jail scene in *Easy Rider* (3.6a). Bruno's awakening in the military hut in *Kings of the Road* (3.6b) bears visual parallels to its New Hollywood forerunner

Exhibition at the margins

A series of title cards that introduce *Kings* refers to the variety of contexts in which it was produced and in which it might be shown. The first announces that the film is in black and white (fig. 3.7). This title card seems somewhat redundant in today's typical viewing circumstances. Any properly functioning device we might use to watch *Kings*, unless it is antiquated, produces colour images by default so that if something appears in black and white we automatically understand it was made that way. *Kings* wasn't a television co-production as such, but according to Peter Buchka, TV company Westdeutscher Rundfunk purchased it in advance.[14] Indeed, TV was a major source of funding for New German Cinema. *Kings*' contemporary audiences might well have encountered it on TV rather than in the cinema, and in the

[14] Peter Buchka, *Augen Kann Man Nicht Kaufen: Wim Wenders und seine Filme* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985), p. 12.

mid-1970s sets might have been black and white or colour. It is therefore my speculation that the black-and-white title card is an acknowledgement that the film is possibly being watched on TV rather than in the cinema. Similarly, the second title card visually 'describes' a widescreen aspect ratio, which the TV might well have had to reproduce using masking since TV adopted the Academy ratio. Once again, the implication is that the film was primarily made for cinematic exhibition. However, it alludes to TV as its alternative 'distributor'.

The aspect ratio title card signals the existence or presence of the projector and, by extension, of the projectionist, to a cinema audience to whom they are normally invisible (fig. 3.8). It also anticipates that a projectionist character will be the hero of the film. The title card inscribes in the text an instruction to those projecting Wenders' movie in the cinema, and it also addresses the vigilant audience member, the notional Paul from Godard's *Masculin-Féminin*, who might remonstrate with the projectionist if the ratio looks incorrect. A gesture of control, this underlining of the aspect ratio emphasises the film as the vision of an individual maker. The projectionist – acknowledged through the aspect ratio as one of the translators of that vision – is a reductive, localised iteration of the filmmaker who might share his vision or not. The aspect ratio references the potential slippage between what the maker intends, what is rendered by the projectionist and what is finally received by the audience. Towards *Kings*' end, a cinema owner describes cinema as 'the art of seeing'. This initial emphasis on the aspect ratio is part of the same set of ideas about the relationship between cinema and individual and collective visions of the world.

Frame enlargements from *Kings of the Road* (figs. 3.7-3.13).
Figure 3.7. Introductory title card informs us the film is in black and white

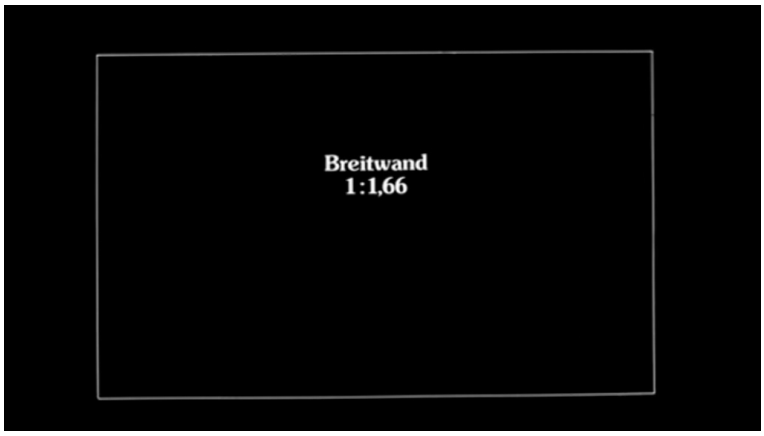


Figure 3.8. Aspect ratio title card

Figure 3.9. Title card situating the film in space and time

In addition, the title card accords the film a European 'identity' by stating the European widescreen ratio of 1:1.66 as opposed to the American one (of 1:1.85). As a European-made widescreen film, *Kings* is reflective of the

dichotomies or complexities of West German life presented in the movie. The European widescreen isn't quite as expansive, horizontally, as the American one. However, a widescreen format is required to accommodate an American genre: that of the road movie. In other words, the 1:1.66 ratio alone alludes to the film's dual influences. On the one hand, it accommodates a film that alludes to Hollywood westerns and road movies. On the other, it is consistent with the film's European setting and cultural influences. As we have already seen, several allusions to Godard's films, such as *Masculin-Féminin*, which itself contains a scene about the American 1:1.85 aspect ratio, are made. *Kings* also has, as a major objective, the expression of a West German point of view and the 'reformation' of a national cinema.

Another title card describes *Kings*' setting along the border with East Germany (fig. 3.9). The demarcation of the relevant stretch of the border, between Lüneburg and Hof, is just short of the whole length of the frontier. Markers of the border feature in the first scene in which Bruno and Robert meet and Robert attempts suicide by driving his car into the Elbe river. The watchtowers on the far bank indicate that, at this point, the river forms part of the border. Rather than dying, Robert simply reaches this natural and geographical limit and can progress no further. Towards the end of the film the protagonists reach the limit again when Bruno misreads the map and they spend the night at the military cabin. The following morning, having found Robert's 'goodbye' note, Bruno's letting out a kind of primal scream while he is framed with a prominent sign marked 'Landesgrenze' (national or state border), similarly creates the impression that the border is an oppressive force, which, though in the background, nonetheless impinges on their lives on several levels of consciousness. In the rest of the film we catch traces of it in fences, a

watchtower and an abandoned industrial structure. This material evidence of historical and contemporary domestic and foreign occupations cutting across and laying waste to the area creates a 'no-man's-land'. The other side of the border, the communist east, is an almost blank space. Apart from the very occasional suggestion of the landscape on the other side, there is one moment only in which it gains a kind of tangibility in the sequence that plays out in and around the military hut when we fleetingly catch sight of a cigarette packet bearing Cyrillic script on the floor. Rather than a representation of the east as enemy territory, it is as if the world simply peters out at the border. The communist east is a 'ghost' or 'phantom limb' in *Kings*. The cinemas and projection booths Bruno visits occupy the same marginal space.

Yet, once again, the title card describing the film's locations raises several complex and interrelated issues to do with the American 'colonisation' of West Germany mooted in the film itself by Robert who exclaims that 'the Yanks have colonised our subconscious'. Informing us that the film was shot entirely on location, it indicates *Kings*' 'cultural mode of production', which diverges from 'economic modes of film production in so far as its logic is not determined by the profit motive (at least not directly)'.[15] Films produced in the cultural mode have much in common with art cinema: they employ formal characteristics that differentiate them from Hollywood productions, include signatures of authorship, 'artisanal values' and an address to the 'nationally specific'.[16] The title cards as a series, with the reference to the 'original soundtrack' as well, make the authenticity of the 'cultural mode of production' understood. In terms of continuing in the vein of authenticity established by the title cards, the prologue

[15] Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*, p. 3.
[16] Ibid., p. 40.

has the air of a documentary interview with the older male cinema owner, which it originally was. In fact, 'The opening interview is one of many Wenders filmed with real theater owners. He discarded the others because their insertion disrupted the fragile storyline too much'.[17] The prologue thus also makes a statement about *Kings*' improvisational mode of production.

Within the narrative Bruno follows the trajectory of the location shoot and travels the length of the border systematically. This means that, in effect, he carries out a 'patrol' and holds the cultural and ideological line that separates west from east and capitalism from communism. Bruno's ascension of a watchtower halfway through, and the protagonists' 'occupation' of an abandoned military hut near the end, have him imitating such activity. Even if we would modulate this idea of the 'patrol' and say, rather, that Bruno's route follows a line of small-town and village cinemas marginalised by distributors, his itinerary is governed and shaped by the geopolitical environment, which is, in turn, the expression of opposing worldviews. As in *Cinema Paradiso*, geopolitics is once again mirrored by the practices of the exhibition industry. The border locations seem to want to root *Kings* firmly in the contemporary here and now and in relation to the exhibition and film-industry crisis it wants to make visible. Yet in the course of exploring these locales, the film produced has the feel of the road movie or western. In other words, despite its setting and mode of production, American influence is also made visible. This mirrors what Robert says about American 'colonisation' of the West German subconscious, whether the director's intention is that it should or not. It seems clear, however, that Wenders is fully conscious of producing a West German art film and a road

[17] Kathe Geist, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders: From Paris, France to Paris, Texas* (Ann Arbor, MI; London: UMI Research, 1988), p. 53.

movie simultaneously, as a way of expressing Robert's idea about colonisation in filmic terms. The different renderings of the film's title are telling in this regard. The original German title translates into English as 'in the course of time', which presents it as a canvas covering a wide scope of historical, cultural and human questions. Its English title, *Kings of the Road*, seems to want to bracket it with *Easy Rider* and to foreground its homage to American cinema.

The present chapter's discussion of the importance of West German exhibition to the representation of Bruno and to that of audiences continues with the aid of some pertinent metaphors: the haunted projection booth and, within that, the booth as 'courtroom' and as 'watchtower'. They help us access the deep, complicated issues *Kings* incorporates in its reflection on a West German film industry in crisis. In particular, I want to show that, although the film speaks about the contemporary problems regarding cinema, it also explores their place 'in the course of time' and in wider culture and history.

Scenes depicting Bruno's visit to Pauline's cinema, are interspersed with those in which Robert confronts his father (Rudolf Schündler). There is no place for detailed analysis of such scenes here. In contrast to Robert, Bruno is, at first, reluctant to tell the story of his life, or to hear Robert's, and makes this explicit. We learn that Bruno grew up without a father and we aren't told whether his mother is alive. Robert persuades him to revisit one of his childhood homes, but it is deserted and no confrontation with a parent ensues. Instead, Bruno's encounters with the cinema owners of the prologue and epilogue subtly resonate with the scenes in which Robert tries to hold his father to account for his past treatment of him and his mother. I argue that all three scenes – the prologue, epilogue and those at Robert's father's newspaper office – subtly stage a 'trial'. The first location that 'appears' in *Kings*, on the title card

describing its location shooting, is Lüneburg, which was the site of the first war-crimes trial, the so-called Belsen Trial, in 1945, of some of those responsible for mass murder in extermination camps. However, *Kings*' 'trials' don't just evoke those that took place in 1945 and afterwards, but they also have deeper cultural and literary roots.

While the conversation between Bruno and the prologue's cinema owner is amicable, the friendly demeanours of each don't quite obscure the 'courtroom' set-up I am concerned to show. Bruno gently, yet persistently, questions the man. As previously stated, the scene was conducted as an interview rather than a conversation.[18] This aids the prologue's feel of a mild cross-examination. The cinema owner himself conjures the legal process when he informs Bruno that during the 1950s he had been forced to sue the authorities to regain his right to operate a cinema. Eventually, Bruno's 'cross-examination', however artlessly conducted, elicits the owner's 'confession' of his Nazi past. This is the uncomfortable truth on which the scene ends, as if to suggest that, whether Bruno knew it or not, this was where his line of enquiry was leading. As is well documented, Bruno's (or Wenders') was the first generation of West German filmmakers to raise questions regarding the Nazi past.[19] The general taboo that had surrounded these subjects up to the 1960s and '70s was something New German Cinema aimed to break.

When the cinema owner reveals his earlier Nazi party membership, it is a turning point in the mood of the scene, which ends very shortly thereafter. He delivers the unexpected reference to his part in a dark chapter of the nation's life not in the style of a reluctant admission but as a simple matter of fact. He

---

[18] Ibid.
[19] Julia Knight, *New German Cinema: Images of a Generation* (London and New York: Wallflower, 2004), p. 46.

smiles slightly as he enlightens Bruno on the subject, not as though embarrassed but, rather, as though he thinks it mildly absurd or surprising that he had to regain his rights in this way. Conversely, Bruno's body language, and his being seemingly lost for words, betray his discomfort.

Discussing the scenes between Robert and his father, Robert Phillip Kolker and Peter Beicken point out that 'the father-son conflict feeds on an important tradition in German literature … Franz Kafka's works come to mind, particularly … *The Judgement* (1912), *The Metamorphosis* (1912), and … *Letter to His Father* (1919)'.[20] In both *The Judgement* and *The Metamorphosis* fathers, from an initial position of vulnerability and dependence, gradually reveal themselves to be the possessors of unsuspected might. In *The Judgement* a weak, ailing father memorably rises from his sick bed and sentences his son to death. Without seeking to posit the prologue as a reference to Kafka, it is of a piece with the newspaper-office scenes between Robert and his father which are rather more obvious in their evocations of the courtroom, and in which a Kafkaesque atmosphere is put to effective use in pointing up the older generation's problematic hold on power. Bruno's visible reaction to the cinema owner's revelation means the prologue ends with the older man's striking back at his 'son' in an unanticipated way. The scene suggests that it is the younger generation, rather than their parents or grandparents, who are 'haunted' or troubled by their feelings about the Nazi past.

In terms of the 'courtroom' motif in the epilogue, the static position of the epilogue's cinema owner, like that of her counterpart at the beginning, speaks to her 'witness' status. Bruno starts in a similar way by asking a question as to

[20] Robert Phillip Kolker and Peter Beicken, *The Films of Wim Wenders: Cinema as Vision and Desire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 75.

whether she has stopped showing films. One of the ways, however, in which the epilogue differs in feel from the prologue is that there are few traces of the documentary interview, particularly with regards to the actor's performance. Authentic touches such as fumbling for words, or speaking in dialect, as the real cinema owner in the prologue does, wouldn't serve the purpose here of allowing her to make emphatic statements regarding the ills of the industry. Furthermore, Bruno's question doesn't call upon her to justify her past but to account for her present position. In reply, she brings charges of her own. She isn't, therefore, subject to a line of questioning by Bruno to the same degree. Although she is seated, immobile, and tightly framed at times, as though under scrutiny, she takes the opportunity to represent her point of view. Indeed, she has the film's final word in terms of dialogue. The tone in which she speaks enunciates this contempt in which she holds those whom she accuses of trying to force her to show contemptible films. The epilogue, therefore, produces a 'witness for the prosecution' as opposed to the prologue's 'defendant'.

The epilogue also strains the representation of a 'cross-examination' or interview since Bruno's moving around the booth, his behaviour and body language, suggest that he is squirming somewhat; that he isn't comfortable listening to the owner's diatribe. At one point he pauses between projectors and listens (fig. 3.10b). Whereas in the prologue Bruno is physically closer to the projector throughout (fig. 3.10a), in the epilogue, he doesn't find refuge among the machinery for long and seems keen to leave. There is no overt suggestion that the woman is critical of Bruno's own involvement in exhibition, but his unease is perhaps a clue that his manner of supporting the status quo is becoming an untenable position. Perhaps he feels himself implicated in the

situations about which the owner complains. Perhaps he judges, convicts and sentences himself as a result of this encounter.


Figures 3.10a and 3.10b. Bruno 'sheltered' by a projector in the prologue (3.10a) but subsequently failing to find refuge among projectors in the epilogue (3.10b)

In a scene that isn't clearly motivated in narrative terms, Bruno briefly leaves Robert (and a man (Marquard Bohm) whose wife has committed suicide) and ascends a watchtower. The structure is part of the remains of postwar American occupation. It is unmanned except for its brief inhabitation by Bruno. In this regard, it is like the cinemas and projection booths he visits. The watchtower is a metaphorical monument to American power and neglect and the same attitude, on the part of American distributors, that denied exhibitors good quality films and was content to see them die. Wenders' interest in watchtowers also has a precedent which associates them with American counterculture and criticism of American society. In 1969, as a film student, he made a short film, *Alabama (2000 Light Years)*, which, 'is about the song *All Along the Watchtower* and about what happens and what changes when Bob Dylan sings the song or Jimi Hendrix'.[21]

The military hut, which is the venue where Bruno and Robert have a physical fight towards the end of *Kings*, also has a certain amount in common

[21] Anon., '*Alabama (2000 Light Years)*', *Wim Wenders Stiftung: A Foundation*, (n. d.) <http://www.http://wimwendersstiftung.de/en/film/alabama-2000-light-years-from-home-2/>, accessed 7 August 2015.

with the empty projection booths the protagonists encounter. In the course of exploring the second booth they visit, Robert discovers, apart from a flickering TV he switches off, a syringe, a booklet with a woman in her underwear on its cover and a table stencilled with a chess board. This booth is like the military hut in displaying images of nude or topless women on the wall. These items suggest that projection booth and hut alike are spaces in which men without women have time to kill and where they retreat from their duties with various distractions.

The military hut is the venue for the sequence in which Robert utters his observation about the Americans having colonised the West German subconscious. Several aspects of the protagonists' inhabitation of the hut seem to illustrate the statement. Firstly, the protagonists have started to imbibe Jack Daniels, an iconic brand of Bourbon, before they encounter the hut and continue to share the bottle once inside. Secondly, they spend the night in the hut in preference to the truck, which is where they have previously been sleeping, so that they decide voluntarily to 'occupy' the post as if they were military personnel. As already mentioned, the pair takes a certain amount of pleasure in deciphering the graffiti of the previous occupants as if to try to empathise with them. It is also in this same scene that Robert calls Bruno's truck a 'bunker'. The hut attests to the actual American occupation of West Germany, and its definition against, and separation from, its communist neighbours. But its voluntary occupation by the protagonists enacts Americanised or colonised German consciousness. Furthermore, the comparison of Bruno's truck to a bunker expresses the ineluctability of mental American colonisation as far as Bruno is concerned since neither the choice of hut or truck would afford him freedom from his colonised mindset. Thomas

Elsaesser argues that the psychological double-bind in which the characters find themselves develops as a general condition in his paper on 'Germany's imaginary America'.[22] The full implication of Robert's statement about 'the Yanks'' colonisation of the protagonists' subconscious is that West German identity is itself American made.

Figure 3.11. The landscape is 'projected' onto the truck's reflective surfaces, making the truck a 'cinema'

Returning briefly to the truck, Alice Kuzniar asserts that it 'fully substitutes for the cinema'.[23] 'Long takes' of the landscape are 'projected' onto the truck's mirrors and windscreens, making local spaces appear as 'movies' (fig. 3.11). She, Timothy Corrigan and others have produced persuasive analyses of ways in which the vehicle references cinema.[24] The truck-as-cinema or as-projection-booth expresses dual facets of America's 'colonisation' of West German film. On the one hand, the truck represents Bruno's ongoing collaboration with, and exploitation of, the closure of local cinemas. On the other, it symbolises the West German road movie and the countercultural,

[22] Thomas Elsaesser, 'Germany's Imaginary America: Wim Wenders and Peter Handke', in Susan Hayward (ed.), *European Cinema Conference Papers* (Birmingham: AMLC, 1985), pp. 31-52.
[23] Alice Kuzniar, 'Wenders's Windshields', in Roger F Cook and Gerd Gemünden (eds), *The Cinema of Wim Wenders: Image, Narrative, and the Postmodern Condition* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997), p. 228.
[24] Corrigan, pp. 19-31.

critical work *Kings* aims to be. Yet even as a countercultural movie, *Kings* demonstrably builds upon the work of its forerunners from the French New Wave and New Hollywood.

Robert's decision to take his leave of Bruno affords a means of German liberation from the psychological double-bind expressed in the cabin scene. This liberation is connected to German history and culture. Before leaving, Robert fixes a note to the door of the cabin, which says, 'Everything must change' (fig. 3.12). There is more than one factor that speaks in support of this as a reference to the event that supposedly triggered the Protestant reformation when, in 1517, Martin Luther is said to have nailed his objections against certain practices of the Catholic church to the door of the church in Wittenberg. Firstly, Robert's fixing the note isn't *Kings*' first allusion to the reformation or related developments. A portrait of Johannes Gutenberg hangs on the wall of Robert's father's newspaper offices where a printing press is located (fig. 3.13). The portrait's display echoes the epilogue's projection booth with its images of Bardot and Lang. Gutenberg's advances in printing played a vital part not only in spreading Luther's ideas, but in the replacement of Latin with vernacular languages and in promoting mass education and literacy. (It is also during the scene in the hut that Robert reveals that his professional specialism is how children learn to write.) His placing the note on a nail on the door is something of an anomaly inasmuch as on another occasion he places one under Bruno's windscreen wiper. The drift of Robert's message is also radical if gnomic. We assume he means that Bruno should change his way of life, which is how Bruno himself interprets it. Yet it is applicable to a number of the problems and situations the film depicts. New German Cinema itself attempted to create a new national cinema and to depart from what had gone before.

Figure 3.12. The note Robert fixes to the cabin door

Figure 3.13. A portrait of Johannes Gutenberg hangs on the wall of Robert's father's newspaper offices

The note contains text in three languages. The book from which Robert rips the paper for the note has the French word 'présentation' printed on it. Apart from writing his message of change in German ('Es muss alles anders werden') he signs the note in American English, 'so long'. The use of German to express the need for change is fitting since New German Cinema sought to address problems in the national film industry. The uses of French and American English are equally apt because the note thus continues an acknowledgement throughout *Kings* that both the French New Wave and Hollywood cinemas, or European and American cultural influences, are relevant in shaping German consciousness. At the same time, the Protestant

reformation is a home-grown movement that might be imagined as a significant predecessor of pop-cultural revolutions since the middle ages.

The persistence of cinema in *Kings of the Road*

Apart from the masturbating stand-in projectionist at Pauline's grandparents' cinema, Bruno encounters few fellow projectionists. *Kings* is structured around sojourns in a series of largely empty projection booths. His meeting a young projectionist doesn't bode well as far as the future of cinema is concerned. Bruno attempts to educate him about the intermittent mechanism of the projector and how it works. However, the boy displays a lack of interest. Firstly, he is unashamedly oblivious to the fault Bruno identifies in his projector. He is readier to discuss Bruno's jukebox. Bruno's reluctant protégé's face is partially obscured by dark glasses, and his scars aren't immediately obvious, so Bruno's gentle enquiry as to whether he has had an accident brings his physical trauma to light. As if to make graphic the damage he has sustained in the motorbike accident, the sequence ends with the projectionist inserting the flame from a lighter in his mouth and sucking it in so as to demonstrate some kind of internal cavity (or perhaps numbness). It identifies him with the projector that has had its mechanism removed for repair, as well as continuing a motif of the projectionist as only half-there or absent altogether.

After the protagonists' trip to the Rhine, they call at a cinema which requires clearing of its equipment. The implication is that it is closing for business. Although Robert jokingly calls Bruno's truck a museum, the unspoken reality is that Bruno acquires his 'spoils' as a result of the fact that suburban and rural cinemas are becoming unsustainable. Repeated encounters with empty booths and missing or stand-in projectionists of low

interest and competence paint a far from healthy picture of contemporary exhibition. Its persistence, or future, is thus portrayed as precarious.

A comparison between *Kings*' prologue and epilogue illustrates that the persistence of cinema is an issue complicated by the problems of the West German industry. In Bruno's discussion with the older male cinema owner of the prologue, he seems particularly interested in issues related to making a living. One of the first topics is that of musicians losing their jobs when cinemas converted to sound film. Bruno later asks whether the owner could live on cinema alone, which he answers in the negative. Then he continues with a question as to whether cinemas will have disappeared altogether from small towns within a few years. In the course of the film, issues relating to Bruno's own capacity to make a living from cinema recur. In this respect, his self-interest might well be a factor in his questioning of the owner. It is something of an irony that the owner can no longer live from cinema whereas Bruno can, even if the meagre living only supports an itinerant with a mobile 'cinema' and no fixed abode. Nonetheless, Bruno's questioning suggests that he has something invested in cinema's future.

The prologue is also consistent with *Kings*' depiction of cinema owners as being of Bruno's grandparents' generation. Pauline refers to the fact that she works at the cinema in order to help her grandparents. As part of Bruno's securing a job after he and Robert have returned from their trip to the Rhine, he says he has been persuaded to stay on in the evening to project the film (because the projectionist himself is ill) by the projectionist's grandmother, who, we infer from this, runs the establishment. The owner of the epilogue appears to be somewhat younger; of Bruno's parents' generation. Yet she makes more than one reference to her father, whose spirit and views on cinema she seems

determined to keep alive. In several ways, Fritz Lang seems symbolic of this generation, and as such he seems to embody some of the difficulties it poses.

Lang 'appears' in both the prologue and epilogue. The first cinema owner's hesitant recollection of the names of the two parts of his silent epic, *Die Nibelungen* (1924), provides a lingering allusion to the director. On one hand, Lang's epic evokes a great and glorious era in cinema history when Germany held its own against the Hollywood leviathan; and even posed it a threat, something to which the cinema owner's juxtaposition of it with Hollywood epic, *Ben-Hur* (Fred Niblo, 1925), alludes.[25] On the other, *Die Nibelungen* has difficult nationalist associations.[26] Its screenwriter, Lang's one-time wife Thea von Harbou, remained active in film in the Third Reich after Lang's departure for America and their divorce. Bruno's conversation with the cinema owner alludes to a number of uncomfortable issues including the extent to which Lang's generation helped create the conditions for the Nazi rise to power, the extent to which they supported the Nazi regime and the problem of former Nazis being allowed to resume positions in the West German film industry after the war.[27]

The prologue is more optimistic in tone than the epilogue. On the specific question of cinema's persistence, the prologue's owner predicts that where a cinema in a small town exists, it will still be there ten years hence. Tacit in this opinion is the belief that a kind of nadir has been reached in that the

---

[25] Sabine Hake, 'Transatlantic Careers: Ernst Lubitsch and Fritz Lang', in Tim Bergfelder, Erica Carter and Deniz Göktürk (eds), *The German Cinema Book* (London: British Film Institute, 2002), p. 218.

[26] Lang himself recounted the story that he left Germany the day Goebbels offered him the headship of UFA. Tom Gunning's research finds nothing to corroborate this, though Goebbels did express a desire, in his diary, that one day Lang direct for the Nazis. Goebbels also had the first part of *Die Nibelungen* reissued in 1933. For Gunning, the story Lang repeated about his interview with Goebbels speaks most to his tendency to render his own life 'cinematic', but it was also a way for him to make his allegiances clear and to cover up what Gunning suspects was a more ambivalent attitude towards Nazism than Lang would admit. See Tom Gunning, *The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), pp. 8-10 and p. 38.

[27] Knight, p. 11.

situation for small exhibitors can't become any worse. In contrast, the epilogue's extremely embittered owner doesn't show films. However, although the prologue's overall effect is markedly more optimistic than the epilogue, the prologue's owner alludes to the possibility that film production might cease. He says, 'if films were still being made', cinemas would survive, and he emphasises the conditional tense. Therefore, in some ways, ambiguity about cinema's future is present in both scenes.

The epilogue opens by fading in from a long shot of Robert's departing train, as it diverges from Bruno's truck, to a close-up on a running projector. As the close-up holds on the projector, it shows both its 'life', as the illuminated gate flickers with the flaming, energetic passage of the moving celluloid, and its 'death' as a sudden click is followed by, first one light, then another extinguishing and its moving parts slowing, hissing and grinding to a halt. This poetic opening of the epilogue has the machine die in front of our eyes, and lends a note of pathos. In the prologue Bruno sports his customary overalls over a bare torso. In contrast, the black leather jacket he wears in this scene might be insulation against the booth's chilly, hostile atmosphere, but as outerwear, it signals his preparation for exit. The projectors in the booth featured in the epilogue are sheathed in membranous polythene covers (fig. 3.10b) so that Bruno's somewhat shiny jacket creates a point of visual harmony between Bruno and the abstinent, protected machines.[28] The owner calls contemporary West German film fare the 'mere exploitation of all that can be

[28] Geist observes that objects 'wrapped in plastic' are a regular feature in Wenders' oeuvre and cites several examples. She doesn't mention *Kings*' projectors and neither does she discern a persuasive common thread of significance linking instances of this. Whatever else shrink-wrapped objects may mean, they would seem to be an authorial 'signature'. A signature that is more readily identifiable as such appears a short time later in the final shot of the movie when the camera pans from Bruno to a neon 'WW' (ostensibly lighting for the cinema's name but referring to Wenders). Ibid., p. 53.

exploited in human heads and eyes'. In the final scene the camera follows Bruno's gaze up to the name of her cinema: she has erected a virginal 'White Wall' against the tide of filth (the name of the cinema – Weisse Wand – also means 'white screen').

The woman refuses to show films in order to uphold ideals she shares with her father regarding cinema as 'the art of seeing'. Yet her position in this rather empty, sterile booth with its shrink-wrapped projectors appears impossible, extreme and eccentric, despite her justifications. Hers is the final dialogue spoken in *Kings*: a judgement that nothing at all is preferable to cinema in its contemporary condition. Unlike the cinema owner of the prologue, who reveals himself to have been a Nazi party member in his final line of dialogue, and unlike Pauline's grandparents, she refuses to collaborate with the industry. As she speaks of withholding and withdrawal, Bruno translates this into action. All his gestures, his packing his bag, doing up his jacket, switching things off and unresponsiveness to her arguments are preparations for his leaving. We suspect that the woman will continue to 'haunt' the booth, but Bruno has been 'exorcised'.

The final shots of the film continue to depict the surreal scene of the cinema which advertises nothing playing or 'coming soon'. Bruno gets back into his truck and tears up his schedule, indicating that he has decided to give up life as an itinerant projectionist. The camera pans from Bruno to the cinema's neon sign. Some of the letters that remain lighted spell out (apart from the director's 'WW' initials) 'end'. The final shot conjures several endings: the end of Bruno's life as a projectionist on the road, the end of the film, the notion of Wenders ceasing to make films (or the end of West German production in general). On the other hand, the empty cinema also invites a fresh start and Wenders'

'signature' alludes to such a possibility. Elsewhere in *Kings* some lines of dialogue recall a statement from *Contempt*, which is uttered by Lang. In *Kings* a man whose wife has committed suicide intones that, 'Life is all there is. Death doesn't really exist'. Lang's observation is that 'death is no solution'. Both suggest that cinema must go on.

Goodbye, Dragon Inn and the imminent projectionist

Goodbye, Dragon Inn is set in the Fu Ho cinema in Taipei against the backdrop of the intradiegetic screening of King Hu's 1967 sword-fighting classic *Dragon Inn* (*Long men kezhan*). While the film in the film plays, subplots unfold involving the few characters that attend, or work in, the cinema. Foremost among these is the ticket clerk (Chen Shiang-chyi) who searches for the projectionist (Lee Kang-sheng) in order to gift him half a steamed bun. The projectionist appears once the film has ended and the clerk has started her end-of-the-day routine. The pair never meets though the projectionist finds the gift. At the same time, a young Japanese tourist (Mitamura Kiyonobu) wanders around the cinema hoping for a sexual assignation. His advances are brushed off by a man (Chen Chao-jung) who tells him that the cinema is haunted. Eventually, he bolts from the cinema as a result of his feeling disturbed by another presence in the auditorium. Towards the end of the film it is revealed that the cinema is closing.

Since *Goodbye* imparts a narrative about cinema, it is useful to situate it in relation to the rest of Tsai Ming-liang's filmic oeuvre. Though it develops tropes and themes found in his other works, there are several significant ways in which it is an anomaly. Unlike Tsai's previous run of films (from 1998's *The*

Hole (*Dong*) onwards), it was funded entirely by his own Taiwan-based production company rather than partly with French money. However, after *Goodbye* the films – in the main – revert to being French and European co-productions with Taiwan. Lee Kang-sheng is the star of the majority of Tsai's films. He usually portrays a character called Hsiao-Kang, the son of a family whose father is played by Miao Tien. Both actors appear in *Goodbye*, with Lee playing the projectionist and Miao playing himself. Miao appeared in *Dragon Inn* and in *Goodbye* he plays one of the actors who attends in order to watch the film in which he had a role. Hence certain pre-established dynamics are interrupted in *Goodbye* and there is no sense in which the characters continue the father-son relationship established in other films of Tsai's.

Despite certain ways in which Goodbye differs from the rest of Tsai's oeuvre, two of his previous films, *What Time Is It There?* (*Ni na bian ji dian*) (2001) and a short, *The Skywalk is Gone* (*Tian qiao bu jian le*) (2002), sow seeds that germinate in *Goodbye*. Taipei's Fu Ho movie theatre, the real cinema that forms *Goodbye*'s setting, makes its debut in *What Time* in a scene in which Hsiao-Kang enters as a patron. Both *What Time* and *Skywalk* (which continues *What Time*'s rather loose narrative) feature Chen Shiang-chyi as Hsiao-Kang's love interest, just as she plays a ticket clerk who appears to desire the projectionist in *Goodbye*.[29] The clerk's pronounced limping gait makes it patent that, whether or not the projectionist is the incarnation of Hsiao-Kang, she isn't the woman with whom Hsiao-Kang might be enamoured in *What*

[29] Before Chen's character leaves for a trip to Paris in *What Time*, she returns to the skywalk (or bridge) where she previously purchased Hsiao-Kang's own watch from him after much persuasion, and makes him a present of a cake. He subsequently places the cake on his car dashboard and forgets it until later when, on opening its box, he sees that it has gone mouldy and throws it away. The business with the cake is a minor chain of events in *What Time*, rendered more so by the longer scenes about the watch. However, it echoes in *Goodbye* as Chen's character once again tries to interest Lee's in an edible treat, which he appears at first to overlook or spurn.

Time and *Skywalk* (again, this is no clear-cut matter), though of course, the parallels between the films establish an emotional schema that overlays all of them. *Skywalk*, too, prefigures *Goodbye* in that it begins by superimposing its opening credits over a film in a film, though in fact it is a series of advertisements playing on a giant screen in a public square in Taipei. The short film also delays the appearance of Hsiao-Kang while it concentrates on Chen's character's circulation around the city, which we have reason to think is her conducting a search for him.[30] In other words, *Goodbye* fits thematically with other works of Tsai's exploring social alienation through the changing city (and its missing skywalks and closing cinemas) while also disrupting certain patterns enough to highlight its being somewhat removed from the arc of the other films.

Goodbye makes the projectionist's presence in the projection booth, while the film is playing, ambiguous. Our view of the projector and the film reel running within the diegesis is withheld until the screening of *Dragon Inn* is over. The projectionist is shown as he rewinds what we assume is *Dragon Inn*. If his presence in the booth and the exhibition of *Dragon Inn* don't appear to coincide, the same is true of his not being co-present with the audience. He doesn't manifest in the booth till they, too, have dispersed. Thus he isn't depicted watching the film or carrying out any film-related activity that could identify him as a viewer.

While the projectionist only appears in *Goodbye*'s final scenes, the situation is the inverse as far as the audience is concerned. The auditorium is

[30] The dialogue in the final scene of *The Skywalk is Gone*, in which Hsiao-Kang attends an audition to play in a pornographic film, makes explicit that he has given up selling watches for a living. Whether this foray into the movie business opens up a small window of possibility that he might subsequently become the projectionist at the Fu Ho is an open question even though, when pressed by an interviewer to make a declaration on the matter, Tsai rather diffidently seems to affirm that the projectionist is Hsiao-Kang (in Shujen Wang and Chris Fujiwara, '"My Films Reflect My Living Situation": An Interview with Tsai Ming-liang on Film Spaces, Audiences, and Distribution', *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 14:1 (Spring 2006), p. 232.).

shown to be full to capacity in the opening sequence, but thereafter it is sparsely populated, as if the original audience quickly and suddenly evaporates. Moreover, as if to reinforce the idea of audience depletion, the audience disappears twice. That is to say, when the clerk enters the auditorium in order to clean it immediately after *Dragon Inn* ends, it is shown to be devoid of people. This is made clear by a shot in which our point of view positions us behind the clerk, and looking over her shoulder, as she stands in the auditorium doorway and watches the end credits. We then cut to the screen's point of view as the film music ends, the clerk puts the lights on and enters the space in which no one else is visible; none of the few figures we previously saw in the auditorium has remained. In this shot, the clerk is first seen collecting rubbish before leaving the auditorium. Thereafter the shot continues for several additional minutes holding on an auditorium devoid of any activity or human presence. This lengthy shot partly represents a contravention of the exhortation of the audience not to disperse when the film is over, which is the meaning of *Goodbye*'s original Mandarin title.[31] Since the clerk enters as soon as the film is over, the empty auditorium suggests that all its former occupants are ghosts, even the actors and one of their grandsons, who came to see themselves perform in *Dragon Inn*. Yet this is also complicated by the fact that the actors and grandson appear in a later scene in the foyer where they greet one another. The clerk, too, may be a ghost.

Neither the projectionist's appearance nor the audience's disappearance is pronounced. Rather, both parties' states of presence or absence change from one moment to another without any sense of anticipation being created. In

[31] GA Stuckey, 'Ghosts in the Theatre: Generic Play and Temporality in Tsai Ming-liang's *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*', *Asian Cinema* 25:1 (2014), p. 35.

the course of *Goodbye*, and of *Dragon Inn*'s diegetic screening, the ticket clerk seeks the projectionist in his booth repeatedly. Her quest to find him constructs him as present and absent simultaneously in that he is clearly her object and present to that extent, but she doesn't discover or make contact with him while she searches. Secondly, though he doesn't manifest in the booth while he is her sought-after object, his imminence is implied by his leaving a half-smoked cigarette there. It continues to burn as though its smoker might return at any second. As such, for much of *Goodbye* the projectionist inhabits a state between presence and absence that would seem to be a condition that extends to other characters.

The most prominent member of the audience is the young Japanese tourist. The film's central triumvirate of characters – the clerk, the tourist and the projectionist – never meets. It is through the tourist, rather than the clerk or projectionist, that we discover other audience members. The tourist is shown crossing the cinema's threshold from outside, which distinguishes him from the rest of the characters, including the projectionist, who simply appear and disappear within its precincts. He explores the cinema's peripheral spaces and, in this, he imitates the ticket clerk's quest for the projectionist. Indeed, though the tourist isn't ostensibly seeking the projectionist, his omitting to encounter him in any of the parts of the theatre he visits deepens the mystery regarding the projectionist's whereabouts.

Through the tourist's initial occupation of the auditorium we apprehend that the audience, who are present before his arrival (fig. 3.14a), have disappeared (fig. 3.14b).[32] The tourist's behaviour in the auditorium prefigures

[32] I have lightened most of the frame enlargements from *Goodbye* since the gloomy lighting of the shots themselves can make their still reproductions indistinct.

his circulation in the wider theatre insofar as he changes his seat twice. When he moves the second time it is because he seeks an assignation with a man sitting in front of him. He uses his unlit cigarette to initiate contact. This fails and he leaves the auditorium to look elsewhere. We see him deploy the cigarette similarly in another part of the theatre when he meets a man who is already smoking. If cigarettes are used to facilitate connections between men seeking each other's company, the projectionist's abandonment of his in the booth is an equivocal element. The cigarette itself links him to the theatre's cruising men, but his leaving his in the booth is ambiguous in seeming to disrupt his association with them. Furthermore, the ticket clerk's pursuit of the projectionist constructs him as heterosexual inasmuch as he could be the object of her romantic intentions. *Goodbye* leaves questions regarding the projectionist's sexuality open by withholding his whereabouts.

Frame enlargements from *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (figs. 3.14a-3.19).
Figures 3.14a and 3.14b. The audience are present in the opening scenes (3.14a) but have disappeared when the tourist arrives (3.14b)

Goodbye's representation of its diegetic audience has a certain amount in common with that of several other films in the corpus. Firstly, there are points of convergence between the representation of the projectionist and that of the audience. Secondly, as in several other films, the visibility of the audience is heightened by its distinctiveness and by its activities that diverge from those related to watching films. As a young male, who seems isolated inasmuch as

he meets no other person before leaving the cinema, *Goodbye*'s projectionist reflects the physical images and the social profiles of the men shown cruising. Such men seem to constitute a significant proportion of those in the auditorium or wandering around elsewhere. The prominence of the tourist helps to reinforce this aspect of the audience's character. As in other films of the corpus, however, the reduction of cinema's audience to one predominant social group signals the fragmentation of the audience and doesn't bode well for the sustainability of the Fu Ho cinema.

As previously mentioned, the tourist hears from a man he attempts to seduce that 'this cinema is haunted by ghosts'. The man ends their conversation by saying 'sayonara' or goodbye in Japanese. This prefigures the tourist's fleeing the cinema. It hints that the figure wishes to expel the tourist and that his words are calculated to exorcise him. In a later scene, the words seem to affect the tourist's perception. When he resumes occupation of the auditorium, the seeming disappearance and reappearance right behind him of a fellow patron, who presents as somewhat vampiric, persuades him she is a ghost. He bolts rather clumsily from the theatre. An alternative interpretation is that her sexuality, and what he might construe as her desire for him, also frightens him away. The tourist's being depicted entering, and his sudden flight in recognising what he believes is a ghost, suggest that he might be a human cinemagoer rather than a ghost, and also that the theatre's ghosts are jealous of their space. The incident intimates that, as flesh-and-blood audiences have receded, ghosts have assumed control.

The ticket clerk seeks the projectionist in his booth on two occasions, which are each accorded lengthy scenes in which her phantom-of-the-opera-like image is emphasised or exaggerated. The first time she approaches the

booth by proceeding painfully slowly along corridors punctuated by stairs. We are spared hardly a step of this, an impression sustained by the fact that even when she is out of frame we still hear the rhythmic clopping of her limp, which heightens the anticipation of her arrival. The camera observes the clerk making several attempts to get a view through a window into the booth before heading to its marked entrance. In placing the bun on a table just inside the doorway, she doesn't properly enter the space. This tentative attitude continues in her second visit. Retaining its – initially impermeable – threshold in this way characterises the booth as sacrosanct, and lends her visits the character of a breach or break-in.

As the ticket clerk approaches and deposits the bun, signs of life emanate from the projection booth in the form, primarily, of sounds from the film in the film. Sharp bursts of raised voices, and the coloured shadows dancing behind the clerk that originate through the window, give us the impression of the space's being occupied by people in serious negotiation so that the inn (where most of the *Dragon Inn*'s characters' verbal conflicts take place) has 'commandeered' the booth. The clerk's approach thus augments this impression of the cinema's being taken over by figures from the intradiegetic film. This air of scheming and intrigue is compounded in the second visit when the clerk accesses the booth from above via another entrance, which speaks to the general circuitousness of her approaches. The clandestine nature of both her current – and previous – 'missions' become clearer when she nears the booth's ceiling hatch, switches off her torch and softens her tread. Proceeding to descend to the booth, she makes further efforts to muffle her awkward movements. Once in the booth in a slightly later scene, the clerk's inertia is emphasised by the clanking and swishing of swords, or of arrows or daggers in

flight, and the grunts of those exerting themselves in battle in *Dragon Inn*'s diegesis. It is possible to situate the sounds within *Dragon Inn* that accompany this lengthy shot as coming from the scene in which some children are being held captive in the inn's grain store. A female warrior is instructed to rescue them by accessing the grain store from behind, which is reminiscent of the clerk's using a 'back' entrance to the booth when she visits the second time. In other words, the clerk's wait in the booth corresponds with a plotline in *Dragon Inn* which is about characters gaining stealthy access to the inn. The film in the film thus intimates that the clerk undertakes a covert operation in attempting to apprehend the projectionist.

The projectionist is portrayed as mysterious and semi-present through the eyes of the somewhat spectral woman who pursues him. Certain of *Goodbye*'s characters don't seem to exist in the same space at the same time. The clerk's 'laying siege' to the booth seems effectively to banish the projectionist. Perhaps her desire 'exorcises' him as conviction of the desire of the 'vampire' exorcises the tourist. The projectionist's lack of connection with the audience, or any of the cinema's other dwellers, suggests he exists in a different dimension or that his existence is qualitatively different from those with whom he has no contact.

Unlike the projectionists in *Cinema Paradiso* (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*) (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988) and *Kings of the Road*, the vision of the projectionist isn't emphasised in *Goodbye*. Indeed, one of the film's mysteries is whether he sees the clerk's gift after it is placed in the projection booth. As the clerk herself stares intently at the unopened bun on her second visit to the booth, the proximity of the burning cigarette lends the appearance of the projectionist's having had the opportunity to find it, but having overlooked or

ignored it. He sees it unequivocally, at last, in the ticket booth after the clerk has supposedly left the Fu Ho altogether. The clerk, however, is strongly linked to vision and spectatorship. On her second approach to the booth, she peers into the space through a crack created by the partially opened door (fig. 3.15).[33] In a movie in which there are very few shots that describe the point of view of any character we can categorically identify, the close-up on the clerk's eye seems to express the narrowness of her field of vision. This is a general condition of characters in a narrative in which we have cause to wonder whether they can see one another. The clerk's limited vision doesn't mean that it is only the projectionist she fails to locate until the final scenes; throughout *Goodbye* the only other 'character' with whom she makes contact with her eyes is the on-screen figure of the female warrior from *Dragon Inn*. The occasions on which characters don't see or perceive each other highlight perception per se by pointing to its subjectivity. Additionally, the 'masking' of the clerk's visual field by the single eye and the doorframe means that her view of the booth is funnelled through apertures analogous with those of the camera and projector. This shot is perhaps another allusion to filmmaking as the distillation and concentration of the artist's vision; the expression of a subjective or original take on the world.

[33] The shot of the clerk's eye staring at the booth through the tiny gap, is one which – as a still image – has become something of an icon of the film. For example, it is used as the front-cover image on editions of two books including Michael Berry, *Speaking in Images: Interviews with Contemporary Chinese Filmmakers* (New York; Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2005) and Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen (eds), *Theorising National Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2006).

Figure 3.15. The clerk peers into the projection booth through a crack created by the partially opened door

The notion of seeing, or even of overlooking, the projectionist is, in many ways, paradoxical. In extra-filmic reality, the projectionist's skill partly resides in his effacing his input into the screening of the film and in making himself, and the behind-the-scenes apparatus, imperceptible to the audience.[34] That the films of chapter two seem, conversely, to connect the projectionist to the audience 'forgets' that the audience should, ideally, be oblivious to the projectionist's presence; that his invisibility is imperative. But in many of my selected films, exposure of the projectionist is part of a concern to demystify the exhibition of film by staging and divulging its hidden operations. *Goodbye* is unusual in preserving the projectionist's invisibility while the film in the film is notionally running, and in showing us less of the apparatus and its workings than other films with projectionist characters. In addition, projectionists in the real world often stake their professionalism on remaining unobtrusive. In spite of this, *Goodbye*'s withholding of the projectionist from our view for the duration of the smooth running of *Dragon Inn* is an ambivalent testament to his

[34] N. 1 of the introduction explains my use of the male pronoun with regards to the projectionist in cinema.

competence.[35] Rather than underscoring the projectionist's professionalism, his invisibility raises fundamental doubts about his corporeality, nature, identity, presence and so on and increases the sense of mystery around him.

The projectionist's enigmatic nature in *Goodbye* raises two related issues. Firstly, it throws into relief that the reflexivity of films about projectionists and exhibition isn't normally just one of showing how a film screening is constructed, but is also one of gainsaying the illusionary or magical character of that same screening and exposing it as mundane rather than phenomenal. Secondly, *Goodbye* maintains this sense of projection as occult so that its way of reflecting upon the medium diverges somewhat from that of other films set in picture houses. The exception here is *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (Edwin S Porter, 1902), which is analysed in chapter one, in which the revelation of the projectionist is the climactic moment. As I argue, his suddenly being made visible is a surprise to us as well as to the Josh character since we don't know, up to that point, whether the projectionist will make an appearance at all or where he is located. I therefore want to argue that *Goodbye* distinguishes itself from most of the corpus by endeavouring to restore a sense of the uncanny to the exhibition of film and even to the practice of cinemagoing.

Photography and cinema have long been linked to the uncanny through their capacity to produce 'phantoms', a property which was manipulated in order to create illusion and magic from early in their history.[36] The films of Georges

---

[35] As a side note, we see just enough projection paraphernalia in *Goodbye*'s booth to suggest that the tower system is in use, which is a long-playing system that doesn't require the projectionist to change reels in order to keep the screening running. (Large empty reels are visible when the clerk enters the booth and a single projector, rather than two, is present when the relevant part of the booth is shown.) Viewers may nonetheless assume or speculate, from their knowledge of projectionists in other films, TV programmes or media, that changes of reel are somehow being carried out, despite the seeming repeated absences of *Goodbye*'s operator.

[36] Tom Gunning, 'Uncanny Reflections, Modern Illusions: Sighting the Modern Optical Uncanny', in Jo Collins and John Jervis (eds), *Uncanny Modernity: Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 78.

Méliès provide a well known example. However, the uncanny atmosphere *Goodbye* engenders isn't principally rooted in the manipulation of film or in special effects. Tsai eschews the armoury of tricks even early practitioners like Méliès or Porter had at their disposal. He doesn't use editing to make things magically appear or disappear or deploy double exposures for ghostly effects. Instead, the uncanny atmosphere is predominantly created by a pervasive minimalism achieved by several means: by a narrative that is rather spare, characters whose behaviour and motives are mysterious, sparse dialogue, extremely long takes and minimal editing, static framings and minimal camera movement, an omission of spectacular or special effects and poor illumination of certain scenes and an overall lack of subtlety in lighting with scenes appearing either very dark or almost garish. At this point it should be mentioned that plenitude and volume, which contrasts with the minimalistic tendency just described, are features of *Dragon Inn*. The way in which *Dragon Inn* is deployed in *Goodbye* accentuates the differences between them, as will be discussed below.

The effect of *Goodbye*'s minimalism is to reveal less than most films. The projectionist's absence is emblematic of *Goodbye*'s allowing us to see less in several senses including that of comprehension. In addition, the film's surface or visuals, including its mise-en-scène, are often unpleasant to behold. The Fu Ho cinema itself is dark, vast, concrete, cavernous, featureless and leaking. It is the converse of the plush, comfortable picture palace. Dingy, barely lit scenes alternate with the luridness of the foyer with its flickering neon displays and harsh strip-lighting or the cold but bright images of the toilets, where stalls and urinals, in themselves, constitute a less than stylish setting. As extremely slow cinema, which partly chronicles the tortuous, lumbering,

awkward movements of characters, especially the ticket clerk, through the alternately vast and confined spaces of the theatre, it seems to marshal its resources to the end of instilling an arduous viewing experience that calls upon considerable reserves of patience and isn't rewarded with stunning or glamorous views. There is little sense in which Tsai's film is calculated to entertain, transport or please us. Rather, its effect seems to aim for the alienation of the viewer: from characters whose public and inner lives we can't access; from a space that appears inhospitable and from an inherently antagonistic film as far as withholding viewing pleasure is concerned. In this connection, the tourist's ejecting himself from the auditorium might anticipate or signal the imagined reception of *Goodbye* itself. Similarly, when *Dragon Inn* ends, it is revealed that the auditorium is devoid of people, which momentarily suggests that the film in the film has played in a vacuum. Not only is the notion of a film playing in an empty cinema uncanny, as it evokes automatism and the eradication of the human, it also might obliquely refer to *Goodbye*'s own challenge to the viewer. Yet its portrayal of cinema as a moribund, unfamiliar or uncanny object also affords us an interval in which we might look, afresh, upon it and upon cinemagoing.

The visible projectionist and the visible audience

When the projectionist finally appears, our first view of him is of the back of his head, neck and shoulders (fig. 3.16). After a few seconds he turns to the right, and therewith shows us his face in profile, which is the only element of this introduction which betrays a revelatory impulse. The gesture finally confirms that Lee is in the film. His character's subsequent actions, including his emptying the rainwater-gathering buckets and closing the shutters, signal the

end of the screening and the closing of the cinema. The projectionist, therefore, only visibly deals with film by rewinding it.

Apart from confirming Lee's participation in the film, the shot constitutes the very low-key discovery of a figure who has been sought for most of its duration. It also grants us a view of a previously unseen part of the booth that houses the projector and rewinder, which have similarly remained out of sight until now. Our 'discovery' of the projectionist isn't mediated by the presence of the character who had been looking for him. In this bodily introduction to the narrative the projectionist is tightly 'framed' by the projector, which is massive in the foreground and seems to surround him. Beyond that we see the film rewinding onto a reel, and behind that the wall of the booth. The depth of field in this shot is very shallow and we get little sense of distance between objects. This engenders the claustrophobic feel of the projectionist being hemmed in. By holding him in medium close-up in such a shallow composition, we have 'cornered' him. His appearing in the booth where he was sought by the clerk, but independently of any action pertaining to her search, hints that we have found him in the place he was all along. In other words, it is the clerk's search itself which has kept him from us. J Hoberman suggests that the projectionist is revealed as the omnipotent figure who has been controlling the film in the film even though invisible. He calls it 'a witty inside joke' that 'the man in the booth rewinding *Dragon Gate Inn* turns out to be Tsai's axiomatic protagonist and alter ego, Lee Kang-sheng. He's the prime mover and it's his story after all.'.[37]

[37] J Hoberman, *Film after Film: Or, What Became of 21st-Century Cinema?* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 217.

Similarly, Mark Betz calls Lee 'the ghostly puppet master in charge of the cinematic apparatus'.[38]

Figure 3.16. The shot in which the projectionist appears

The projector is present for much of the film in the form of its sonic representation. Its thrumming and whirring can be heard inside and outside of the booth in earlier scenes as part of the soundscape. Yet when a visual representation is given, the projector is mute and inactive. The scene allows us both to see and hear the rewinder in operation instead, and there is no separation of its 'voice' from its 'body'; it is fully present as the projector never is. Furthermore, if the rewinder has full 'corporeality', perhaps, by association, the projectionist does. This is a clue that the projectionist's plane of existence corresponds to reality rather than to a supernatural realm. Though the mood and atmosphere of *Goodbye* don't change markedly with the projectionist's manifestation, he isn't associated, to the extent the ticket clerk is, with the more excessive elements of the film that characterise Tsai's work, such as the extremely long take.

[38] Mark Betz, 'The Cinema of Tsai Ming-liang: A Modernist Genealogy', in Maria N Ng and Philip Holden (eds), *Reading Chinese Transnationalisms: Society, Literature, Film* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), p. 171.

A second disclosure occurs a few scenes after the projectionist appears in the booth. When the clerk throws a bag of rubbish away as she leaves the theatre, a sign is revealed informing us that the cinema is temporarily closed. It is only at this point that we comprehend this as the context of the clerk's search and its strength of feeling and sense of urgency. We then cut from the clerk's seeing the sign and momentarily pausing to look at it, to the projectionist operating the automatic shutters. The projectionist and clerk perform their end-of-shift routines in parallel. With the clerk's disposal of the rubbish, she exits the cinema, leaving the projectionist as the last figure remaining. Once he leaves, it transpires that she has lingered, having secreted herself in the shadows so as to witness his emergence. She thus displays, to the last, the yearning that has characterised her watching and waiting all along. The projectionist, in his turn, postpones departure by using the fortune-telling machine. This gives him the opportunity to notice the rice cooker and the half of the steamed bun the clerk has left in the ticket booth. Although Tsai's projectionist doesn't display the degree of nostalgia or feeling for cinema as those in the films of the previous chapter, in its much reduced way, his procrastinating before his exit mirrors the behaviour of the ticket clerk and suggests that he isn't impervious to feeling regarding the occasion of the cinema's closure. His finding the bun at this late stage puts him in indirect contact with the clerk as though he intuits her presence or feelings on a metaphysical level or, at least, echoes them, albeit faintly. As the clerk limps away from the cinema in *Goodbye*'s final shot, a song plays entitled, in English translation, *Can't Let Go*. This confirms the clerk's reluctance to leave. An interpretative possibility *Goodbye* makes available is that the clerk's actions have as their objective a petitioning of the projectionist not to close the cinema.

Whatever the case, it seems to me that it is the clerk, rather than the projectionist, who 'possesses' the Fu Ho and is therefore the story's 'prime mover', despite her expulsion at the hand of Tsai's alter ego.

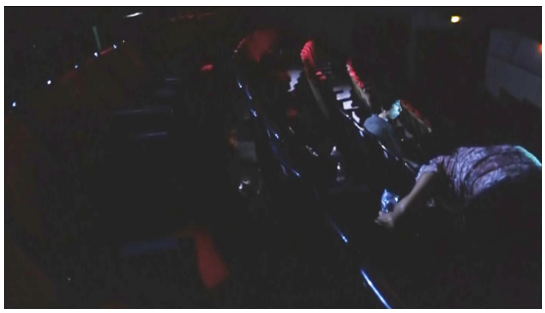
The tourist's circulation of the cinema makes it clear that he desires to see other patrons as much as, or in preference to, a film. The projectionist's seeming absence and the clerk's pursuit of him also suggest the film's secondary importance in terms of the characters' ostensible agendas. The cinema is a space in which patrons signal their sexuality, desire and availability. In other words, they make visible their queer identity in the space of exhibition. Thus, as a locus for cruising, the Fu Ho grants a degree of mutual visibility to a social group, gay men, who have been historically kept, or have kept themselves, hidden in wider society. In making cruising a subject, *Goodbye*, too, makes it publicly visible. The visibility of gay men is problematised through *Goodbye*'s characterisation of them as ghosts or figures who exist on a plane other than reality.

Several critics have dealt, in depth, with the implications of cruising in *Goodbye*.[39] A subject little noted or discussed is the film's representation of ostensibly heteronormative behaviour as it is manifested by two characters: the ticket clerk and the seed-crunching, slightly vampire-like audience member. Of the two, the clerk's representation is more immediately remarkable because of her pronounced limp and its effect. She seems slightly preternatural because of the way her body ripples and shimmies through space as a result of her limp and because of the echo of her gait when she is out of shot. As is described

[39] See, for example, D Cuong O'Neill, 'Cinematic Cruising: Tsai Ming-liang's *Bu san* and the Strangely Moving Bodies of Taiwanese Cinema', in Santiago Fouz-Hernández (ed.), *Mysterious Skin: Male Bodies in Contemporary Cinema* (London: IB Tauris, 2009), pp. 193-205 or Jean Ma, *Melancholy Drift: Marking Time in Chinese Cinema* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), pp. 95-122.

above, the seed-crunching woman is perceived by the tourist as predatory because of her seeming to vanish and reappear behind him. The manner in which she clambers over the seats to retrieve a dropped shoe in the process makes her appear slightly monstrous to us as well as she seems to loom over the tourist with a hunched back and what looks like a headless torso (fig. 3.17b). She also creates a faintly vampiric impression with her long dark hair, heavy make-up, including deep red painted lips, and the way her crunching pronounces the operation of her teeth and mouth (fig 3.17a). As a woman whose self-presentation seems calculated to entice, she, in a different fashion to the cruising men, displays sexuality; one the tourist perhaps perceives as threatening. The representation of both female characters as somewhat otherworldly paints the expression of heterosexual desire as aberrant in a space otherwise designated queer and homosocial. Scholarship on *Goodbye* frequently links the sexuality of the cruising men to the putative alternative regimes of temporality in which they exist.[40] It seems to me that the women's sexuality, too, is rendered queer in the space. Perhaps it is a regime of loneliness, isolation and the need for human or sexual contact of any kind which renders the space queer. The Fu Ho cinema, and its vanishing audiences, embody the atomisation of modern life in global cities like Taipei. This is compounded by the failures of the ticket clerk and the tourist to make the connections they seek.

[40] Ma, p. 99.



Figures 3.17a and 3.17b. An audience member appears as faintly vampiric (3.17a) and looms over the tourist somewhat monstrously when retrieving her shoe (3.17b)

Persistence of cinema in *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*

As mentioned above, *Goodbye*'s original Mandarin title, *Bu san*, means 'don't disperse'. It very well encapsulates an anxiety about the audience's commitment to cinemagoing and cinema. The exhortation also mirrors the condition of figures who linger on in the haunted cinema. As such the original title indirectly raises the persistence of cinema as an issue.

An immediate way *Goodbye* calls the persistence of cinema into question is through the Fu Ho's closure. This element of the narrative, which forms the context of the story, is imparted late in the film after the projectionist appears. The projectionist's manifestation is one of a series of other moments that build towards the sign's revelation of the cinema closure. Immediately before the projectionist is 'found', two of *Dragon Inn*'s key actors, Miao Tien and Shih Chun, who play themselves, and who have been depicted in the auditorium sitting apart, meet in the foyer. Their exchange consists of four comments or observations which, given that *Goodbye* contains very little dialogue indeed, might be regarded as significant. First Shih asks Miao whether he came to see the film. In the normal run of conversation this might be the kind of banal non-question with which people initiate conversation. Yet here, the idea that Miao might have come to the cinema for another purpose is certainly not beyond the bounds of possibility. Although he has a boy we assume to be his grandson in

tow, he first enters the auditorium alone and joins the young child who is already seated. This means Miao has spent an indeterminate interval without the child. Indeed, Miao doesn't answer in the affirmative the question about whether he has been at the Fu Ho to see the film but observes, instead, that it has been a long time since he went to the cinema. Shih rejoinders that no one goes to the cinema anymore and no one remembers them. The idea of cinema's diminished popularity is implied in all four parts of the conversation: in the initial question which doesn't take for granted that watching the film is Miao's principal motivation, in Miao's reply that withholds his motive in being there and suggests his presence is anomalous and in Shih's observations that people in general have become estranged from cinema. The conversation thus anticipates our subsequently finding out that the Fu Ho is closing. Their attendance of the showing of *Dragon Inn* strongly implies that it is the Fu Ho's valedictory screening.

Dragon Inn 'summons' Miao and Shih to the theatre to view their former selves on screen. This places them on both sides of the screen simultaneously and, once again, lends cinematic exhibition a slightly uncanny or spectral aspect. Are the actors ghosts who have been rallied by their film to occupy the cinema? As will be discussed in greater depth below, GA Stuckey persuasively argues that *Dragon Inn* itself is a ghost. In his interpretation, the Fu Ho's closing down summons a succession of spirits to the cinema.[41] Regarded in this light, the projectionist might be the last ghost to appear. In any case, he seems to embody an antithesis to the persistence of cinema, whether he congregates with other ghosts under the sway of the closure or whether he is perhaps the unwitting human agent who exorcises the Fu Ho's ghosts. One

[41] Stuckey, p. 45.

way in which *Goodbye* is different from other corpus films is that its projectionist character isn't portrayed as more emotionally or psychologically affected by the cinema's loss than other characters. The projectionist seems as alienated from watching films as the patrons.

The ghostly wanderings of those who move around the Fu Ho are sometimes shown to be awkward. For example, figures squeeze past each other in the tight spaces of the basement. The clerk is the most hindered in this regard by having what sounds like a prosthetic metal leg. Her 'vigil' for the projectionist in the booth, which forms a very lengthy take during which the clerk stares straight ahead at her gift to the projectionist and his burning cigarette, is consistent with the film's slowness. This scene showing her inertia is preceded by one in which the tourist attempts an assignation in the basement. One shot shows him hesitating as he follows a man. If one looks very carefully at the left of the frame in the foreground, one can barely discern a third 'figure' that resembles the clerk (fig. 3.18). This rather indistinct human female shape with dark hair, wearing what looks like a blue dress or tunic and carrying something like a red scroll, is most likely a cut-out, possible leftover promotional material. 'She' blends into the very dark wall and is easily missed (particularly as the little light that illuminates this shot trains our eyes on the corridor along which the male figure, with a darker blue shirt on, advances, and along which the youth moves from deep focus at the 'back' of the shot to nearer the front). This silent, incongruent 'witness' of the youth's pursuit visually anticipates the motionlessness of the clerk as she waits in the booth. The mannequin's situation is one of being abandoned in the bowels of the theatre, passive, powerless and incapable of agency or movement. This inert mannequin

comments on the clerk's lack of mobility and reinforces her portrayal as stalled or 'stuck'.

That the clerk's overall condition is nostalgia is strongly suggested by the playing of the song *Can't Let Go* as she limps away from the cinema in the rain before the end credits roll. Such a state of feeling is figured in *Goodbye*, through both her and her frozen mannequin counterpart, as decadent, debilitating or paralysis-inducing. A scene that critics particularly link to nostalgia about Chinese cinemagoing is the one in which the 'vampire' cracks watermelon seeds between her teeth. The sound evokes memories of childhood visits to the cinema and a cinemagoing practice that has now died out.[42] Yet such nostalgic associations are irrelevant to the tourist who is disturbed and becomes frightened by the seed-cruncher. In this instance, what helps to represent a nostalgic memory for some is simultaneously woven into the film's horror aesthetic. Horror and nostalgia are competing aesthetics, which occasionally work in combination in *Goodbye*. They are deployed in ways which interrogate the medium. Hoberman ranks the film among those he considers to be 'significant and radically innovative' examples of twenty-first century cinema.[43] Could it be that *Goodbye* critiques nostalgia rather more heavily than is generally recognised or articulated? After all, even as *Goodbye* celebrates a film that engenders nostalgia, such as *Dragon Inn*, it presents itself as its antithesis. In this regard, the projectionist's disassociation with the sword-fighting classic might be seen as his repudiation of, or disregard for, nostalgia rather than carelessness about the fate of cinema.

[42] Jared Rapfogel, 'Taiwan's Poet of Solitude: An Interview with Tsai Ming-liang', *Cineaste* 29:4 (Fall 2004), p. 28.
[43] Hoberman, pp. vii-ix.

Figure 3.18. In the foreground of the frame, and to the left of its centre (circled), one can barely discern a 'figure' that resembles the clerk

Dragon Inn in *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*

Apart from *Dragon Inn*, a second film is quoted briefly in *Goodbye*. Movie posters of *The Eye* (*Gin gwai*) (Pang Brothers, 2002) can be seen clearly in two scenes as the clerk limps past them on her way to the projection booth. *The Eye*'s alternative title is *Seeing Ghosts*. According to descriptions of its plot, it is a horror movie made in Hong Kong about a blind girl who has a cornea transplant in order to be able to see, but can then see ghosts as well, which is not without highly problematic consequences for the girl. The quotation of *The Eye* confirms the contemporary setting of *Goodbye*, since the screening of *Dragon Inn* might confuse us as to what era is represented. Secondly, it is a further hint about *Goodbye*'s themes regarding ghosts and capacities of perception. It is also a horror film, which alludes to the ways in which *Goodbye* is concerned with deploying or subverting the conventions of horror in the service of the creation of the uncanny atmosphere of the cinema or, at least, of the haunted picture house.

Goodbye quotes *Dragon Inn* at considerable length. On the surface the look and narrative themes of *Dragon Inn*, which are immediately evident as part of *Goodbye*'s opening, could hardly contrast more starkly with those of

Goodbye itself. *Dragon Inn*'s scenes are made vibrant by the rich, deep primary colours of the costumes worn and the sky-blue backdrop of the outdoor scenes, whereas the cut to the Fu Ho's auditorium pitches most of the frame into darkness, apart from the patch of bright colour which continues to describe and emanate from the cinema screen depicted (fig. 3.14a). The voiceover from *Dragon Inn*, which accompanies the opening to both films, sets a historical scene which includes ancient Chinese dynasties, evil eunuchs and tribal warfare. *Goodbye* is characterised by spare or minimal formal devices and filmmaking techniques, whereas *Dragon Inn* is characterised by its relative voluminosity in terms of its action-packed narrative, bright and colourful mise-en-scène and its soundtrack which incorporates music and the distinctive instruments of Beijing opera such as the wooden clapper.

The choice of *Dragon Inn*'s 'screening' as a backdrop to *Goodbye*, and its implications, invite exploration even if we might wonder, at first, how the films relate to one another. Indeed, this is a question raised in the film from the first. We 'enter' *Goodbye*'s Fu Ho cinema through its screen in the sense that *Goodbye*'s first images are *Dragon Inn*'s opening scenes, which are revealed as depicting a theatrical screening of the film. These opening scenes appear after *Goodbye*'s credit sequence with the effect that we ascribe *Dragon Inn*'s images and diegesis to *Goodbye* before a cut to the Fu Ho's auditorium reveals that they are displayed on a cinema screen and are therefore an element of mise-en-scène.[44] This conflation of *Goodbye* and *Dragon Inn* is compounded by *Dragon Inn*'s soundtrack, which underlays *Goodbye*'s credit sequence. The temporary fusion of the films initiates a notion iterated throughout: that although

[44] As is discussed in chapter one, *The Projectionist*, too, does something similar at its start by initially representing itself as a cartoon.

the films appear to represent very different kinds of cinema, their juxtaposition is productive in terms of meaning. Indeed, what emerges is that even in terms of plot there are certain similarities between them. For example, as we have already seen, the scheming of *Dragon Inn*'s characters regarding possession of the inn is mirrored in subtle questions regarding who occupies the cinema's spaces in *Goodbye*.

Tsai establishes an unusual set of relations between his frame film and the film it notionally 'screens' within it. *Goodbye* creates the impression that *Dragon Inn* unfolds within it in something approaching real time. Certain narrative 'landmarks' of *Dragon Inn*'s – its opening credits and scenes, the arrival of Xiao (Shih Chun's character), the final battle between the film's heroes and the evil eunuch and the end credits – are dispersed throughout *Goodbye* at intervals that suggest a realistic (if not a real) representation of its running time. Yet *Dragon Inn* is around half an hour longer than *Goodbye*, which means that Tsai edits it to appear as though *Dragon Inn*'s screening provides a continuous, uninterrupted background or context. Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis go as far as to conceive *Dragon Inn* 'almost as a host, through which [Tsai's] contemporary vignettes unfold parasitically' so that they would reverse the normal dynamics and see *Dragon Inn* as the primary text on which *Goodbye* depends.[45]

One of the ways in which *Dragon Inn* helps construct *Goodbye* is in the way its sounds create a sense of the latter's spaces. *Dragon Inn* provides much of *Goodbye*'s sound and a substantial proportion of the dialogue and of the voices we hear. Its sounds function to 'describe' the Fu Ho as cavernous. In

[45] Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh and Darrell William Davis, *Taiwan Film Directors: A Treasure Island* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 236; quoted in Chris Wood, 'Realism, Intertextuality and Humour in Tsai Ming-liang's *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1:2 (2007), p. 110.

one shot, we are shown the actions of the tourist and the clerk in a composition like that of a split screen (fig. 3.19). While the clerk washes a glass in the bathroom in the right of the frame, the tourist enters the auditorium via the corridor on the left. The perceptible roaring or groaning noise underlying this shot could be the gurgling of water in the pipes or drains or some other background provided by the cinema or the city outside. However, when the youth opens the auditorium door, what was low grumbling sharpens to a more distinct set of film noises escaping. At this moment we see the clerk look up, showing that she has registered this self-admittance to the movie. Though this is a fine detail, it makes us aware that what we get of *Dragon Inn* is – in some instances – fragmentation and distortion of the soundtrack for the purposes of creating a particular environment or atmosphere. This isn't the only example of dampened and inarticulate moans and groans that represent *Dragon Inn*'s sounds emanating from the auditorium in the corridors and spaces outside. They are often low rumbles so that we are not sure whether we hear the thunder of a rainy night or a distant vehicle instead.

Figure 3.19. When the tourist (left in shadow and long shot) opens the auditorium door, escaping sounds will cause the clerk (right) to raise her head

Stuckey notes Tsai's separation of *Dragon Inn*'s images and sounds into 'discrete units'.[46] That is to say that that for much of *Goodbye* all we are 'shown' of *Dragon Inn* is its sounds. His most pertinent findings, as far as the present discussion is concerned, relate to the representation of the human voice in *Goodbye*, which supports his argument that *Dragon Inn* itself is a ghost and that 'it has returned – like the ghosts discussed in the previous section – to be unreeled one last time'.[47] He observes that dialogue is always absent from those of *Dragon Inn*'s images we are shown, so that we can never locate the source of any of *Dragon Inn*'s human voices by reference to its images. The implications of this phenomenon, which Michel Chion calls 'acousmêtre', are that:

> in those situations when a voice cannot be identified by spectators as belonging to any body, it takes on characteristics of omniscience and even omnipotence. The longer the acousmêtre remains unseen, the greater its power (and the greater our desire to discover its source); once the acousmêtre is visualized (de-acousmatization) it loses its power over the narrative.[48]

Since *Dragon Inn*'s eponymous inn is the venue on which several rival factions converge to plot, connive with and fight one another, it is therefore the place where the most talking is done. We only hear or overhear, rather than see, such inn scenes in *Goodbye*. In other words, although much of *Dragon Inn* takes place within the inn, *Goodbye* doesn't allow us to see it save for a couple of brief views of its exterior. The effect is that the muttered shifts and intrigues of *Dragon Inn*'s characters are reproduced in *Goodbye* as background sounds and voices that emanate from invisible and disembodied sources. Once again,

[46] Stuckey, p. 41.
[47] Ibid., p. 45.
[48] Ibid., p. 42.

the dissonance is both disconcerting and evocative of ghosts possessing the space. That we never see the contested inn encourages our transposition of plotting or of parties trying to take over space onto the theatre instead.

D Cuong O'Neill discusses moments when *Dragon Inn*'s dialogue seems applicable as some sort of commentary on *Goodbye*.[49] The tourist's entering the auditorium for the first time coincides with on-screen dialogue between characters in *Dragon Inn* which pertains to one faction or cohort securing the inn against other parties in pursuit. Therefore, dialogue emanating from *Dragon Inn* after the tourist takes his seat includes an enquiry as to how many guests there are. The reply is that there are none. This is relevant to *Goodbye*, too, since it is with the tourist's entry into the auditorium that we first remark that the auditorium is no longer full to capacity as it was in the opening scenes, and that the audience we first saw has largely evaporated. The conversation continues with someone issuing instructions that they are to occupy the entire inn and no new guests should be admitted. This prefigures the tourist's later expulsion from the theatre.

The tenor of the existence or substance of *Goodbye*'s cinema occupants is one of the film's central mysteries; whether we are seeing ghosts when we see such characters or whether they represent fully present human beings. That the audience appears to vanish on two occasions intimates the possibility that all the Fu Ho's patrons are apparitions whose presence in the auditorium and elsewhere is no more stable than that of the figures on screen, who are fictitious representations. Characters inhabiting the respective diegeses of *Goodbye* and *Dragon Inn* are therefore linked by questions as to the limits of their existence as temporary, or temporally-bound representations or shadows.

[49] O'Neill, p. 199.

In *Goodbye*, the intermittently vanishing audience is a highly visible and mobile constituency, even though figures mightn't perceive each other. However, their frequently eschewing the auditorium and the film to pursue other ends highlights them as having agendas and missions similar to those of *Dragon Inn*'s characters. The strategic breakdown of the division between the diegetic worlds of the auditorium and screen, largely through the way *Dragon Inn* is edited and deployed, illuminates the coexistence of two diegeses rather than a hierarchical structure in which one is more substantial or real than the other.

The resultant levelling or equivalence of the two films and a sense of two cinemas being brought into dialogue with each other is encapsulated by a sequence which occurs a third of the way through the film as the clerk approaches the projection booth for the second time. In one shot the clerk, who is framed by a doorway, is positioned adjacent to the screen that bears the image of *Dragon Inn*'s female warrior (fig. 3.20a). The clerk looks across at the screen as if watching the warrior stealthily approach the inn. At this point in *Dragon Inn*'s narrative, the warrior purposes to access the inn in order to rescue children being held inside. Just as the clerk's mauve sweater visually echoes the warrior's pale blue robe, so her imminent 'mission' to the booth and the way in which she approaches it via a circuitous, alternative route, and by trying to make her movements soft and silent, echoes the warrior's activities. Subsequently, a series of very rapid cuts alternates close-ups on the warrior's face with those on the clerk's (figs. 3.20b and 3.20c). So uncharacteristic are these cuts, which are synchronised with the dramatic staccato of *Dragon Inn*'s music, that for a moment it seems as though *Dragon Inn* has assumed control of its 'host' film.

Figures 3.20a, 3.20b and 3.20c. The clerk is positioned adjacent to the screen that bears the image of *Dragon Inn*'s female warrior (3.20a)

Subsequently, very rapid cuts alternate close-ups on the warrior's face from *Dragon Inn* (3.20b) with the clerk's (3.20c)

This cutting between close-ups on the women's faces brings their respective filmmaking modes 'face to face' with each other. The warrior looks to the right of the frame in her shots and the clerk looks to the left, creating an impression of their making eye contact; as if the warrior's gaze replies to the clerk's. Of course, a trope of the film in the film, which goes back early instances such as *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*, has an on-screen character seeming to address a diegetic audience member. The notion of a 'dialogue' between the characters opens up the possibility that the warrior hands her mission on to the clerk; that the booth and the movie theatre as a whole – like the inn – is contested territory. Moreover, the 'meeting' of the respective protagonists represents two film cultures momentarily holding one another in regard.

The women's juxtaposition pits the poise of the warrior, who we witness finishing off multiple attackers with swordplay characterised by swiftness, grace and panache, against the clerk's ungainly gait with its comparatively reduced claim on visual pleasure. These extremes of bodily competence and display are representative of the styles of the characters' respective films and their relationships to narrative. *Goodbye* shows titbits of sword-fighting action from *Dragon Inn*'s diegesis, though we aren't allowed to become absorbed in scenes calculated to excite and transport us as we might if we watched *Dragon Inn* independently. The two or three of *Dragon Inn*'s action-packed set pieces we are shown contrast dramatically with *Goodbye*'s static nature. *Goodbye* itself precludes our becoming immersed in a narrative. Its divergence from *Dragon Inn* reinforces that the audience's immersion in narrative is precisely what Tsai's films counter.

To return, briefly, to *Goodbye*'s opening, the fully populated auditorium implicitly suggests that the screening of *Dragon Inn* can command a full house. In subsequent scenes, it is revealed that it doesn't. Yet this problem can't be resolved satisfactorily with the idea that the capacity crowd we observe at first is a kind of flashback to the past; to the 1960s when *Dragon Inn* was produced. This is gainsaid by the camera's 'discovery' of, and lingering on, the back of two heads scholars have repeatedly recognised: the bald one of *Goodbye*'s director, Tsai, and the long hair of Taiwanese film critic, Alphonse Youth-Leigh.[50] Their attendance indicates a contemporary timeframe which excludes the flashback as a possibility. Regardless of explanations of the audience's disappearance, the full house indicates that *Dragon Inn* is a popular film in its intent. By implication, the audience's evaporation highlights that *Dragon Inn*'s appeal has

[50] Ma, p. 112.

waned in that it no longer has the 'pulling power' to summon a mass audience. *Goodbye*'s opening scenes, in which people assemble to watch the film, are illustrative of two relationships: that of the film's capacity to induce the audience to attend the cinema and that of the strong social bonds between people. As *Goodbye* progresses, its characters enact the atomised state of society. In parallel with that, *Goodbye* itself is a kind of acknowledgement that films don't command cinema attendance to the same degree as they once did. In filmmaking terms, Tsai's response isn't to attempt to coax the audience back but, rather, to address the atomisation of society by means of films that mirror and replicate the primacy of the individual, and the vision of the individual, over that of the collective audience. From a certain point of view, *Goodbye* does indeed mourn the passing of certain cinemagoing practices. However, it shouldn't be overlooked that the film, in the shape of the clerk in particular, simultaneously points to nostalgia as retrograde to the point of repugnant.

Conclusion

If many of my corpus films depict audiences who don't necessarily attend the cinema to watch movies, *Kings of the Road* and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* suggest that this pursuit of other agendas presages a widespread renunciation of cinemagoing. An attendant paradox is that as the cinema increasingly becomes a site for human and sexual contact and intercourse, both audiences and sites of exhibition themselves decline and disappear.

Despite their different contemporary settings, *Kings of the Road* and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* depict the space of film exhibition as homosocial; as the domain of young men. As a buddy movie, *Kings of the Road* privileges

relationships between men and somewhat marginalises women. Accordingly, Bruno and Robert have difficulties sustaining ties with girlfriends and wives, despite their deep longing for such. However, the 'cold war' between the sexes is crystallised in the final sequence in which a female cinema owner defends her stand against pornography. In this character it may be discerned that the breakdown between the sexes is analogous to the breakdown between the West German film industry and its cinemagoing public or between filmmakers and their potential audiences. That is to say, the audience may be likened to this final woman; it might be less contemptuous of cinema, and may be wooed back to theatres, if the film industry changed its own disregard and contemptuous attitude towards it in turn.

Goodbye, Dragon Inn yields a rather different, but equally disappointed, woman. Though the ticket clerk's precise agenda in seeking the projectionist is far from clear, several elements hint strongly that she doesn't want the Fu Ho to close. If preventing this is her mission, it is arguably implied that, within that, she seeks to make cinema a heteronormative space. That is to say, her yearning for the projectionist places heterosexual desire, and an attendant romantic melodrama, at *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*'s heart. This drive is repudiated in every other element, and it ultimately fails. The tragic tone of this is, however, tempered by the concept that the nostalgia she represents, and from which she suffers, is debilitating. There are thus at least two plausible ways in which to interpret *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*. One is that it celebrates, mourns and is nostalgic for past practices of cinemagoing and is also nostalgic for when cinema was a medium of mass entertainment. A second is that cinema is, these days, principally important as a means of the expression of individual or alternative states of being or particularised social identities, visions and

worldviews that may also challenge and trouble received social orders. In other words, film's principal purpose is to facilitate self-expression. These interpretations aren't mutually exclusive. As society and social practices change, cinema, too, can either respond (and perhaps even lead the way) or stagnate.

With reference to the poles mooted in the previous chapter in which films are either for the audience or about the audience, *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* is firmly planted in about-the-audience territory whereas *Dragon Inn* is for them. *Kings of the Road* is similarly about the audience whereas the pornography denounced within it probably occupies an extreme end of the for-the-audience pole.

As described above, *Kings of the Road* wears its improvisational mode of production on its sleeve, so to speak, from the opening title cards onwards. Both films use their experimental forms, and narratives about missing projectionists and audiences who don't watch movies, to turn cinema into an object of contemplation and to foreground the medium as an 'art of seeing'. Both films see the projectionist expelled from the cinema and both use the concept of haunting, and the aesthetics of exhaustion, to propagate an unsettling mood that raises questions around how cinema might persist. Neither film overtly caters to our viewing pleasure. Nor is either film for us, but about us and our reception of films and attitudes and positions towards the medium. Above all, the films were made for cinema's own sake and to question the state of the art and its social importance.

Conclusion

The present study's principal finding is that the projectionist in cinema is a figure through which film spectatorship might be explored in film. This is due, in large part, to the projectionist's unique spectatorial position, which his on-screen depictions help to delineate.[1] On-screen representations reverse the invisibility – the remaining out of sight of the audience – which is the projectionist's preserve in real life. Thus the projectionist in cinema is a contradictory figure. In the film narrative he is a putative agent of cinematic illusion. In other words, he is shown striving, and often failing, to make the screening unobtrusive so that his audience might 'forget' they are watching a film. However, the on-screen demystification of the projectionist's activities inscribes in the film text itself a means to draw the extra-diegetic audience's attention to the processes of screening and to their own film spectatorship.

Films set around cinemas depict the site of exhibition as a crucible of comedic or dramatic events and encounters. This implies that filmmakers recognise exhibition and reception as significant. Along with the projectionist, who is frequently at the centre of cinema-based stories, the audience, too, usually plays a prominent role. Indeed, if it seems obvious or redundant to observe that films set around cinemas make projectionists and audiences visible, stating this alludes to a sense that both are somewhat elusive in reality. That is to say that when we actually attend the cinema it is difficult to apprehend our fellow patrons as a collective or as individuals. Furthermore, there hasn't been much scholarly investigation of how films conceive of, or portray, practices

[1] N. 1 of the introduction explains my use of the male pronoun with regards to the projectionist in cinema.

like exhibiting film, going to the cinema or watching a film. The implications of making these activities a narrative subject and making them highly visible through their treatment by cinema itself is a paradox that has largely escaped critical attention.

The projectionist's uniqueness also lies in factors other than his invisibility. Firstly, his occupation requires him to watch films. His professional identity is thus bound up with film spectatorship. Secondly, he functions as an intermediary or bridge between the theatrical projection of film and cinemagoing, between film production and reception and between the world as on-screen representation and the world the audience inhabits. Once again, analysis of the projectionist in cinema facilitates our recognition of this intermediate position. Together with the projectionist in cinema's close association with film spectatorship and the dichotomy around his visibility, his intermediary position also advances him as a figure who is extraordinarily situated to grant us access to questions regarding the significance of exhibition and reception.

Despite the diversity of the films chosen for analysis in this study, a set of tropes emerges across all of the texts which pertains to the way the projectionist is represented. The projectionist's vision is one such. In this connection, and as is most clearly illuminated in *Kings of the Road* (*Im Lauf der Zeit*) (Wim Wenders, 1976), he regards the film image differently to the ordinary spectator. Beyond that, the way the projectionist views cinema itself or, indeed, the wider world is explored in most of the films. Other tropes include the intermediate position referred to above together with his functioning as a 'filmmaker'. As the agent who carries out the most cinema-specific form of labour in the films considered here, the projectionist is often also a privileged figure – or victim – in

comedies or dramas about failing or closing cinemas or some other instability of the screen or apparatus, as in the American examples in chapter one. It is often a crisis regarding exhibition which heralds the projectionist's appearance as a prominent cinematic subject.

One of the facets of the projectionist that most differentiates him from the ordinary cinemagoer is his handling of film. His occupation is a means by which questions regarding how films are received or watched, how they circulate, how they are public objects and how they function in society are raised. To that extent, he is closely associated with issues the films raise regarding the future of cinema.

My analyses of films in the films, specifically, suggest that what the projectionist screens is significant: movies, too, 'go to the cinema'. However, certain factors might prevent them from entering. Alternatively, they might leave the cinema in an altered state, fail to stay long enough to satisfy demand or are the wrong films altogether, as is discussed in my analyses of *Kings of the Road* and *Cinema Paradiso* (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*) (Giuseppe Tornatore, 1988). Audiences overtly express their stake in what films are shown, sometimes by staying away. Rather than modelling a passive, entranced spectatorship, my corpus portrays a dynamic relationship between viewers and films in which viewers actively encounter and react to films, sometimes to the extent of entering them through the screen. The projectionist himself unspools, laces, edits, trims, splices, rewinds, packs and otherwise handles film, and his interference with it is analogous to some of the more active forms of viewership portrayed. *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, 1924) unites the positions of 'filmmaker' and active audience member. Rather than interfere with the film from the booth, Keaton's projectionist dreams of doing so from the auditorium through the

screen. Indeed, the very figure of the projectionist questions the extent to which the positions of filmmaker and viewer are distinct since both can be engaged in making film. The viewer 'reconstructs' the film while in front of the screen. At the same time, by means of intertexts and references to other films, the filmmaker attests to his or her own viewing and cinephilia.

Apart from the fact that the projectionist (or the competent one) necessarily adopts a different mode of looking at the film image to check it is correctly displayed, the projectionist character is frequently presented as having superior vision, or as being a visionary. He often has a propensity to dream, gift for prophecy or he sees in ways others don't. What is suggested in several of the films is, therefore, that, beyond the industrial apparatus, cinema is a mode of viewing the world; an attitude or a stance towards it which seeks a deeper truth or perhaps a determination to see beyond surfaces or imagine alternatives to what is given. Through their projectionist characters, *Kings of the Road* and *Cinema Paradiso*, in particular, allude to cinema's loss as an impoverishment of human perception, capacity or experience.

Despite the tropes that unite most or all of the projectionists in my corpus, my analyses equally suggest that his filmic representations are sensitive to the contexts in which they appear. *Cinema Paradiso* and *Kings of the Road* refer or allude to local distribution and exhibition issues as well as contemporary society and politics. In both cases distribution conditions, and the patchy or poor access to good quality films they afford cinema patrons, echo the geopolitical landscape within which the movie house is located. In other words, in these films' distribution and exhibition practices help to make visible how constituencies of people are situated in social, economic and political terms. I have aimed to demonstrate that in my corpus films the specificities and

dimensions of reception space are evident. The films thereby extend reflexivity to include the ways in which films reflect upon their construction as it relates to the social uses of cinemagoing and to their situation geographically, historically and in film history. In other words, I show that films don't merely reflect upon their own forms and the specificity of the medium but they reflect upon how their construction – or reconstruction in the audience's reception of them – is conditioned and inflected by the space of reception. My chosen films display a socially, politically, historically contextualised reflexivity as opposed to one that is merely formal.

The films in my corpus all incorporate at least one film screening within their diegeses; one or two include dozens. Whether a film in the film has been originated expressly for incorporation in the frame film, or whether it is a clip from a pre-extant, extra-diegetic film, it has a clear mimetic function to facilitate the convincing depiction of a film screening. In *Cinema Paradiso* the inserted clips are also consistent with the time and place the frame film represents. Indeed, one way one might comprehend, and keep abreast of, the passage of time in the frame film is with reference to the diegetic screenings. In other words, in *Cinema Paradiso* the clips' mimetic functions are multiple. However, in all of my analyses I have tested a hypothesis that films in the film frequently transcend their purely mimetic functions and place two diegetic worlds – that of the film in the film and that of the auditorium – in dialogue with one another across the screen boundary.

As has been observed by Thomas Elsaesser, the dissolution of the screen boundary, and the melding of the 'worlds', or diegeses, of audience and film, already occurs in *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (Edwin S Porter,

1902).[2] Josh's refusal to observe the division the screen represents when he cavorts with the on-screen dancer is an example. As is discussed in chapter two, the diegetic films in both *The Smallest Show on Earth* (Basil Dearden, 1957) and *Cinema Paradiso* initiate interplay between the notionally separate diegetic zones of the auditorium and the screen. In *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* (*Bu san*) (Tsai Ming-liang, 2003), the joining of diegetic zones is forged when, for example, the dialogue uttered on screen seems applicable in some way to the audience. The interconnection of diegeses is also iterated by the audience's appearing to be ghostly entities whose presence in the auditorium is no more stable than that of the figures on screen. The proximity of cinema to, and its relevance to, the audience's own sphere of concern is expressed in the knitting together of diegeses through and across the screen in several of the films in my corpus.

In bringing into one full-length study films that would normally be dispersed among studies of national cinemas and auteurs, I am able to offer an in-depth examination of the film in the film in a variety of forms and deployed to a range of effects. I proceed on the basis that the filmmaker selected a film for inclusion in the frame film in recognition of its connotative potential as well as for its mimetic function. In *Cinema Paradiso* the choices of film, and an organisation of them that isn't simply chronological, allude to political directions and possibilities that Italian society might have taken up after the second world war but didn't. I also argue that the interplay between films in films and the audience depicts the auditorium as a potential alternative political sphere to, for

[2] Elsaesser says, 'Focusing on one of early cinema's most crucial variables, namely the relation between screen space and auditorium space, I have argued that both spaces, taken together in their mutual interdependence, made up early cinema' s unique diegetic space' in: 'Discipline through Diegesis: The Rube Film between "Attractions" and "Narrative Integration"', in Wanda Strauven (ed.), *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), p. 218.

example, the town square where the cinema resides. I argue that *The Projectionist* (Harry Hurwitz, 1971) is a meditation on the factors attending which films reach the screen so that the fact of a screening itself can be read in political terms as iterating the underlying power structures in place. I argue throughout that the interplay between intradiegetic and frame films, and between the diegetic zones of the screen and the auditorium, are crucial vehicles of meaning. *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* would no doubt raise questions about the nature and purpose of cinema even without its containing an action movie. However, its incorporation of a film which seems to be its antithesis helps to throw into relief its own mode of production, its essential nature and inherent attitude towards the cinematic medium.

In common with the rest of the corpus, *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* reflects upon film reception. Figures both within the movie theatre's diegesis, and within that of the film in the film, represent attitudes of watching and waiting, which are postures that would seem proper to the reception of slow cinema itself. In *A Useful Life* (*La vida útil*) (Federico Veiroj, 2010), when Martínez (Manuel Martinez Carril), the manager of the arthouse cinema, holds forth during his radio broadcast on the type of spectatorship fostered by the quality cinema the Cinemateca offers, he talks at length about how films themselves educate the viewer about how to watch films. The examples to which he refers, and his manner of talking about, for example, the relationship between image and sound, mean that he speaks in terms very familiar to the academic film critic. This is nothing short of the interpretation of film spoken in, and by, a film. One of the study's points of departure from previous work on reflexivity is its sustained examination of how film spectatorship is portrayed, what films about projectionists hold in common, or say individually, about what it means to show

films, what it means to watch them and the significance of the decline in cinemagoing.

The movies I have studied are all interested in how one should watch films. *Kings of the Road* and *Goodbye, Dragon Inn* in particular, through their experimental forms and the demands they make on the viewer, raise the problem of where meaning in film resides and how it might be accessed. Meanwhile, the analytical mode I have deployed in the present work is a function of the same concern (of what and how films mean). My close reading produces sustained attempts to identify and examine the meanings the corpus 'makes available', following Richard Dyer's encapsulation of the practice.[3] Thus the present textual-analysis enterprise is more than justified by the finding that my chosen films solicit the viewer's attention, patience and engagement in interpreting what she perceives.

Despite the pitfalls interpretation can open up if one isn't vigilant to them, it seems to me that, as much as, and indeed more than, any other approach or methodology in film studies, the deployment of close reading affirms that film matters. In this connection, the present study wants to be understood as attempting to accomplish two main objectives. Firstly, it strongly re-states the case for watching, focusing upon and interpreting films as the highly reputable, indispensable business of the discipline of film studies. Secondly, through its selection of films and its intense focus on them, it discovers several complex iterations of the filmic world of the audience and the various sets of functions it performs. It demonstrates how these enrich our comprehension of the ways in which films reflect upon themselves, upon their construction by the apparatus of

[3] Richard Dyer, 'The Persistence of Textual Analysis', *Kracauer Lectures in Film and Media Theory* (Winter 2015/16) <http://www.kracauer-lectures.de/en/winter-2015-2016/richard-dyer/>, accessed 13 February 2018.

production, but most importantly as far as this work is concerned, upon their reconstruction by the viewer. In this, my starting point, and my guide throughout, has been the projectionist.

Appendix
Films featuring projectionists

The following list of films featuring projectionists has been compiled since I started the thesis in September 2014. While I have endeavoured to watch as many of the films as possible, I haven't been able to access them all. In cases where viewing hasn't been possible, I have verified that a projectionist features with reference to descriptions of plot or character and so on.

The list is constituted of films in which a character projects films for public entertainment. However, I haven't included those in which the projection occurs in a home-movie viewing scenario such as *Rebecca*, Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, Prod. Selznick International Pictures, USA, 1940, *Sunset Boulevard*, Dir. Billy Wilder, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1950 or *Super 8*, Dir. JJ Abrams, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 2011 or those in which, for example, a film is projected within a courtroom or other professional or educational environment such as *Fury*, Dir. Fritz Lang, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA, 1936 or *Caught*, Dir. Max Ophüls, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA, 1949. Nor have I included those in which projection occurs when a movie director watches rushes such as *Bellissima*, Dir. Luchino Visconti, Prod. Film Bellissima, Italy, 1951, *The Bad and the Beautiful*, Dir. Vincente Minnelli, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA, 1952 or *Contempt* (*Le mépris*), Dir. Jean-Luc Godard, Prod. Rome Paris Films; Les Films Concordia; Compagnia Cinematografica Champion, France; Italy, 1964. In addition, I have found that there are films set in picture houses which one watches in vain to see a projectionist such as *The Last Picture Show*, Dir. Peter Bogdanovich, Prod. Columbia Pictures Corporation, USA, 1971 or *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, Dir. Woody Allen, Prod. Jack Rollins & Charles H Joffe Productions, USA, 1985.

Films are listed in chronological order.

The Countryman and the Cinematograph, Dir. Robert W Paul, Prod. Paul's Animatograph Works, UK, 1901.

Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show, Dir. Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1902.

Bill as an Operator (*Patouillard opérateur de ciné*), Dir. Paul Bertho, Prod. Lux Compagnie Cinématographique de France, France, 1910.

The Revenge of a Kinematograph Cameraman (*Mest kinematograficheskogo operatora*), Dir. Wladyslaw Starewicz, Prod. Khanzhonkov, Russia, 1912.

Mabel's Dramatic Career, Dir. Mack Sennett, Prod. Keystone Film Company, USA, 1913.

Luke's Movie Muddle, Dir. Hal Roach, Prod. Rolin Films, USA, 1916.

A Movie Star, Dir. Fred Hibbard, Prod. Keystone Film Company, USA, 1916.

The Original Movie, Dir. Tony Sarg, Prod. Herbert M Dawley Production, USA, 1922.

Sherlock Jr., Dir. Buster Keaton, Prod. Buster Keaton Productions, USA, 1924.

Crazy to Act, Dir. Earle Rodney, Prod. Mack Sennett Comedies, USA, 1927.

The Talk of Hollywood, Dir. Mark Sandrich, Prod. Prudence Pictures, USA, 1929.

Buddy's Theatre, Dir. Ben Hardaway, Prod. Leon Schlesinger Studios; The Vitaphone Corporation, USA, 1935.

Hellzapoppin', Dir. HC Potter, Prod. Universal Pictures, USA, 1941.

Stop Press Girl, Dir. Michael Barry, Prod. Aquila Film, UK, 1949.

The Magic Box, Dir. John Boulting, Prod. Festival Film Productions, UK, 1951.

Clash by Night, Dir. Fritz Lang, Prod. RKO Radio Pictures, USA, 1952.

The Smallest Show on Earth, Dir. Basil Dearden, Prod. British Lion Films, UK, 1957.

The Blob, Dir. Irvin Yeaworth, Prod. Tonylyn Productions Inc, USA, 1958.

The Tingler, Dir. William Castle, Prod. Columbia Pictures, USA, 1959.

Cleo from 5 to 7 (*Cléo de 5 à 7*), Dir. Agnès Varda, Prod. Ciné Tamaris; Rome Paris Films, France; Italy, 1962.

The Family Way, Dir. John Boulting; Roy Boulting, Prod. Boulting Brothers, UK, 1966).

Here Is Your Life (*Här har du ditt liv*), Dir. Jan Troell, Prod. Svensk Filmindustri, Sweden, 1966.

Masculin-Féminin, Dir. Jean-Luc Godard, Prod. Anouchka Films; Argos Films; Sandrews; Svensk Filmindustri, France; Sweden, 1966.

Casino Royale, Dir. Ken Hughes et al, Prod. Famous Artists Productions, UK; USA 1967.

Targets, Dir. Peter Bogdanovich, Prod. Saticoy Productions, USA, 1968.

The Omega Man, Dir. Boris Sagal, Prod. Walter Seltzer Productions, USA, 1971.

The Projectionist, Dir. Harry Hurwitz, Prod. Maglan, USA, 1971.

The Spirit of the Beehive (*El espíritu de la colmena*), Dir. Victor Erice, Prod. Elías Querejeta Producciones Cinematográficas SL; Jacel Desposito, Spain, 1973.

Eskimo Nell, Dir. Martin Campbell, Prod. Salon Productions, UK, 1975.

Small Change (*L'argent de poche*), Dir. François Truffaut, Prod. Les Films du Carrosse; Les Productions Artistes Associés, France, 1976.

Kings of the Road (*Im Lauf der Zeit*), Dir. Wim Wenders, Prod. Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR); Wim Wenders Productions, West Germany, 1976.

Hollywood Boulevard, Dir. Allan Arkush; Joe Dante, Prod. New World Pictures, USA, 1976.

Nickelodeon, Dir. Peter Bogdanovich, Prod. British Lion Film Corporation; Columbia Pictures Corporation; EMI Films, UK; USA, 1976.

Silent Movie, Dir. Mel Brooks, Prod. Crossbow Productions, USA, 1976.

The Picture Show Man, Dir. John Power, Prod. The Australian Film Commission; The Limelight Productions (II); New South Wales Film Corp, Australia, 1977.

Ruby, Dir. Curtis Harrington, USA, 1977.

The Muppet Movie, Dir. James Frawley, Prod. Henson Associates; ITC Films, UK; USA, 1979.

Quadrophenia, Dir. Franc Roddam, Prod. The Who Films; Polytel, UK, 1979.

Those Wonderful Movie Cranks (*Bájecní muzi s klikou*), Dir. Jirí Menzel, Prod. Filmové studio Barrandov, Czechoslovakia, 1979.

Blood Theatre (*Movie House Massacre*), Dir. Rick Sloane, USA, 1984.

Gremlins, Dir. Joe Dante, Prod. Warner Bros, USA, 1984.

Night of the Comet, Dir. Thom Eberhardt, Prod. Thomas Coleman and Michael Rosenblatt Productions, USA, 1984.

Demons (*Dèmoni*) Dir. Lamberto Bava, Prod. DACFILM Rome, Italy, 1985.

Desperately Seeking Susan, Dir. Susan Seidelman, Prod. Orion Pictures, USA, 1985.

Coming Up Roses (*Rhosyn a Rhith*), Dir. Stephen Bayly, Prod. Red Rooster Film & Television Entertainment; Sianel 4 Cymru (S4C), UK, 1986.

Anguish (*Angustia*), Dir. Bigas Luna, Prod. Luna Films; Pepon Coromina; Samba PC, Spain, 1987.

A Man from Boulevard des Capucines (*Chelovek s bulvara Kaputsinov*), Dir. Alla Surikova, Prod. Mosfilm, Soviet Union, 1987.

Wish You Were Here, Dir. David Leland, Prod. Channel Four Films, UK, 1987.

Apartment Zero, Dir. Martin Donovan, Prod. Producers Representative Organization; The Summit Company, UK, 1988.

Cinema Paradiso (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*), Dir. Giuseppe Tornatore, Prod. Cristaldifilm, Italy; France, 1988.

Splendor, Dir. Ettore Scola, Prod. Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica, Italy; France, 1989.

Come See the Paradise, Dir. Alan Parker, Prod. Twentieth Century Fox, USA, 1990.

Gremlins 2: The New Batch, Dir. Joe Dante, Prod. Warner Bros, USA, 1990.

The Inner Circle, Dir. Andrei Konchalovsky, Prod. Numero Uno International, Italy; Soviet Union; USA, 1991.

Popcorn, Dir. Mark Herrier, Prod. Movie Partners; Trans-Atlantic Pictures, USA, 1991.

Gas Food Lodging, Dir. Allison Anders, Prod. Cineville, USA, 1992.

Once Upon a Time, Cinema (*Nassereddin Shah, Actor-e Cinema*), Dir. Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Prod. Jozan Film, Iran, 1992.

Hercules Returns, Dir. David Parker, Prod. Philm Productions, Australia, 1993.

Last Action Hero, Dir. John McTiernan, Prod. Columbia Pictures Corporation, USA, 1993.

Matinee, Dir. Joe Dante, Prod. Universal Pictures, USA, 1993.

Le Film de les Nuls (*La cité de la peur*), Dir. Alain Berbérian, France, 1994.

Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead, Dir. Gary Fleder, Prod. Miramax; Woods Entertainment, USA, 1994.

Nitrate Base (*Nitrato d'argento*), Dir. Marco Ferreri, Prod. Audifilm; Salomé, Italy; France; Hungary, 1996.

Wind with the Gone (*El viento se llevó lo que*), Dir. Alejandro Agresti, Prod. Agresti Films, Argentina; France; Netherlands; Spain, 1998.

Fight Club, Dir. David Fincher, Prod. Fox 2000 Pictures, USA; Germany, 1999.

Shadow Magic, Dir. Ann Hu, Prod. Beijing Film Studio, China; Germany; Taiwan; USA, 2000.

The Majestic, Dir. Frank Darabont, Prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 2001.

The Road (*Jol*), Dir. Darezhan Omirbayev, Prod. Artcam International; Kadam-T Kazakhfilm Aïmanov; NHK, Kazakhstan; France; Japan, 2001.

The Magic Box (*La boîte magique*), Dir. Ridha Behi, Prod. Alya Films; Atlas Entertainment; Canal Horizons, France; Tunisia, 2002.

Porn Theater (*La chatte à deux têtes*), Dir. Jacques Nolot, Prod. Elia Films, France, 2002.

Ticket to Jerusalem, Dir. Rashid Masharawi, Prod. Argus Film Produktie, Netherlands; Palestine; France; Australia, 2002.

Bulletproof Monk, Dir. Paul Hunter, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA; Canada, 2003.

For the Children (*Meili de dajiao*), Dir. Yazhou Yang, Prod. CTV-Media Studio Corporation, China, 2003.

Goodbye, Dragon Inn (*Bu san*), Dir. Tsai Ming-liang, Prod. Homegreen Films, Taiwan, 2003.

Chased by Dreams (*Swapner Din*), Dir. Buddhadev Dasgupta, Prod. J Sughand Productions Pvt Ltd, India, 2004.

Desperado Tonic, Dir. Varja Mocnik; Boris Petkovic, Prod. Vertigo, Slovenia, 2004.

Electric Shadows (*Meng ying tong nian*), Dir. Jiang Xiao, Prod. Beijing Dadi Century Limited; Happy Pictures Culture Communication Co Ltd, China, 2004.

Cinema, Aspirins and Vultures (*Cinema, Aspirinas e Urubus*), Dir. Marcelo Gomes, Prod. Dezenove Filmes; Rec Produtores Associados Ltda, Brazil, 2005.

Parzania, Dir. Rahul Dholakia, Prod. Circles Motion Pictures, USA; India, 2005.

The Fall, Dir. Tarsem Singh, Prod. Googly Films, USA; South Africa; India, 2006.

Cartouches gauloises, Dir. Mehdi Charef, Prod. KG Productions, France; Algeria, 2007.

The Good Life, Dir. Stephen Berra, Prod. FarFalla Films, Canada; USA, 2007.

Katyń, Dir. Andrzej Wajda, Prod. Akson Studio, Poland, 2007.

Mr Bean's Holiday, Dir. Steve Bendelack, Prod. Universal Pictures, UK; France; Germany; USA, 2007.

Mr. Cinema (*Lo kong ching chuen*), Dir. Leung Chun 'Samson' Chiu, Prod. Sil-Metropole Organisation, Hong Kong, 2007.

Popcorn, Dir. Darren Paul Fisher, Prod. Content Providers; DMS Films Limited; Popcorn the Movie Ltd, UK, 2007.

Coming Soon (*Program na winyan akat*), Dir. Sophon Sakdaphisit, Prod. GMM Tai Hub (GTH); Joy Luck Club Film House, Thailand, 2008.

Service (*Serbis*), Dir. Brillante Mendoza, Prod. Centerstage Productions, Philippines; France; South Korea; Hong Kong, 2008.

Tony Manero, Dir. Pablo Larraín, Prod. Fabula Productions, Chile; Brazil, 2008.

Daddy Longlegs (*Go Get Some Rosemary*), Dir. Benny Safdie; Josh Safdie, Prod. Neistat, Scott and Associates, USA; France, 2009.

Inglourious Basterds, Dir. Quentin Tarantino, Prod. Universal Pictures, Germany; USA, 2009.

Obselidia, Dir. Diane Bell, USA, 2010.

A Useful Life (*La vida útil*), Dir. Federico Veiroj, Prod. Cinekdoque; Mediapro; Versátil Cinema, Uruguay; Spain, 2010.

Vanishing on 7th Street, Dir. Brad Anderson, Prod. Herrick Entertainment, USA, 2010.

Chillerama, Dir. Adam Green; Joe Lynch, Prod. ArieScope Pictures, USA, 2011.

Stella Days, Dir. Thaddeus O'Sullivan, Prod. Irish Film Board; Newgrange Pictures, Ireland; Norway; Germany, 2011.

The Phantom Father (*Tatal fantoma*), Dir. Lucian Georgescu, Prod. Generic Audiovizual (GAV), Romania, 2011.

Living Images (*Elavad pildid*), Dir. Hardi Volmer, Prod. Exitfilm, Estonia, 2013.

Why Don't You Play in Hell? (*Jigoku de naze warui*), Dir. Sion Sono, Prod. King Records, Japan, 2013.

The Last Showing, Dir. Phil Hawkins, Prod. The Philm Company, UK, 2014.

Carol, Dir. Todd Haynes, Prod. The Weinstein Company; Film4, UK; USA, 2015.

The Nice Guys, Dir. Shane Black, Prod. Misty Mountains, USA, 2016.

Bibliography

Allen, Graham, *Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

American Film Institute, '*Sherlock Brown*', *American Film Institute*, (n. d.) <https://catalog.afi.com/Catalog/moviedetails/12042>, accessed 18 April 2018.

Ames, Christopher, *Movies about the Movies: Hollywood Reflected* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2006).

Andrew, Dudley, 'Film and Society: Public Rituals and Private Space', in Hark, *Exhibition*, pp. 161-71.

Andrew, Dudley, *What Cinema Is!: Bazin's Quest and its Charge* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK and Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

Anon., '*Alabama (2000 Light Years)*', *Wim Wenders Stiftung: A Foundation*, (n. d.) <http://www.http://wimwendersstiftung.de/en/film/alabama-2000-light-years-from-home-2/>, accessed 7 August 2015.

Anon., '*Cinema Paradiso* and Cinemecchanica (sic) in Italy...', *Film-Tech Forums*, (2001) <http://www.film-tech.com/ubb/f1/t002155.html>, accessed 25 April 2016.

Anon., *Film-Tech Cinema Systems*, (1999-2018) <http://www.film-tech.com>, accessed 14 February 2018.

Anon., '*Im Lauf der Zeit*', *Filmverlag der Autoren*, (n. d.) <http://www.filmverlagderautoren.de/filme/im_lauf_der_zeit>, accessed 6 September 2015.

Anon., *The Kinematograph Year* (London: Kinematograph Publications Ltd, 1930).

Anon., 'Le Gaf Tecniche Di *Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*', *Proiezionisti.com*, (2005) <http://www.cinematech.it/forum/viewtopic.php?t=1020>, accessed 24 April 2018.

Anon., 'Lux: *Bill as an Operator*', *The Bioscope* (10 November 1910), p. 33.

Balio, Tino, *The Foreign Film Renaissance on American Screens, 1946-1973* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).

Barański, Zygmunt G, and Lumley, Robert (eds), *Culture and Conflict in Postwar Italy: Essays on Mass and Popular Culture* (Macmillan in association with the Graduate School of European and International Studies, University of Reading, 1990).

Barnard, Timothy, ‘The “Machine Operator”: *Deus Ex Machina* of the Storefront Cinema’, *Framework* 43:1 (Spring 2002), pp. 40-75.

Barr, Charles, *Ealing Studios* (London: Studio Vista, 1993).

Barris, Alex, *Hollywood According to Hollywood* (South Brunswick, NJ: AS Barnes, 1978).

Barthes, Roland, *The Rustle of Language* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

Bateman, John A, and Schmidt, Karl-Heinrich, *Multimodal Film Analysis: How Films Mean* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

Bayman, Louis (ed.), *Directory of World Cinema. Italy* (Bristol, UK; Chicago, IL: Intellect, 2011).

Bayman, Louis, *The Operatic and the Everyday in Post-War Italian Film Melodrama* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

Bayman, Louis, and Rigoletto, Sergio (eds), *Popular Italian Cinema* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

Behlmer, Rudy, and Thomas, Tony, *Hollywood's Hollywood: The Movies about the Movies* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1975).

Bellour, Raymond, ‘Analysis in Flames’, *Diacritics* 15:1 (Spring 1985), pp. 52-6.

Bellour, Raymond, and Penley, Constance, *The Analysis of Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

Bergfelder, Tim, Carter, Erica and Göktürk, Deniz (eds), *The German Cinema Book* (London: British Film Institute, 2002).

Berry, Dave, ‘Film and Television in Wales’, in Hill and McLoone, *Big Picture, Small Screen*, pp. 196-204.

Berry, Dave, *Wales and Cinema: The First Hundred Years* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994).

Berry, Michael, *Speaking in Images: Interviews with Contemporary Chinese Filmmakers* (New York; Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2005).

Betz, Mark, ‘The Cinema of Tsai Ming-liang: A Modernist Genealogy’, in Ng and Holden, *Reading Chinese Transnationalisms*, pp. 161-72.

Billig, Michael, *Banal Nationalism* (London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995).

Biro, Yvette, ‘Perhaps the Flood: The Fiery Torrent of Tsai Ming-Liang's Films’, *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 26:3 (September 2004), pp. 78-86.

Bishop, Christopher, and Buster Keaton, ‘An Interview with Buster Keaton’, *Film Quarterly* 12:1 (Autumn 1958), pp. 15-22.

Blandford, Steve, *Film, Drama and the Break-Up of Britain* (Bristol, UK; Chicago, USA: Intellect, 2007).

Böhn, Andreas, ‘Nostalgia of the Media / in the Media’, in Nöth and Bishara, *Self-Reference in the Media*, pp. 143-53.

Bondanella, Peter, *A History of Italian Cinema* (New York: Continuum, 2009).

Bordwell, David, ‘From *Poetics of Cinema*: Cognition and Comprehension: Viewing and Forgetting in *Mildred Pierce*’, in Braudy and Cohen, *Film Theory and Criticism*, pp. 427-44.

Bordwell, David, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

Bordwell, David, ‘Transcultural Spaces: Toward a Poetics of Chinese Film’, *Post Script* 20:2 (2001), pp. 9-24.

Bottomore, Stephen, ‘The Panicking Audience?: Early Cinema and the 'Train Effect', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 19:2 (1999), pp. 177-216.

Braudy, Leo, and Cohen, Marshall (eds), *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Brook, Clodagh, ‘Screening the Autobiographical', in Hope, *Italian Cinema*, pp. 27-51.

Brunetta, Gian Piero, *The History of Italian Cinema: A Guide to Italian Film from its Origins to the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).

Brunette, Peter, *The Films of Michelangelo Antonioni* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Buchka, Peter, *Augen Kann Man Nicht Kaufen: Wim Wenders und seine Filme* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985).

Burrows, Jon, and Wallace, Richard, *'Slaves to the Lamp': A History of British Cinema from the Projection Box* (New Barnet: John Libbey, forthcoming 2021).

Burton, Alan, and O'Sullivan, Tim, *The Cinema of Basil Dearden and Michael Relph* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

Burton, Alan, O'Sullivan, Tim, and Wells, Paul (eds), *Liberal Directions: Basil Dearden and Postwar British Film Culture* (Trowbridge: Flicks, 1997).

Carew, Anthony, ‘Still Life: The Films of Tsai Ming-liang’, *Metro Magazine: Media and Education Magazine* 183 (2015), pp. 56-63.

Carroll, Noël, *Interpreting the Moving Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Casetti, Francesco, 'Cinema in the Cinema in Italian Films of the Fifties: *Bellissima* and *La signora senza camelie*', *Screen* 33:4 (Winter 1992), pp. 375-93.

Casetti, Francesco, *Inside the Gaze: The Fiction Film and Its Spectator* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

Cavell, Stanley, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1979).

Celli, Carlo, and Cottino-Jones, Marga, *A New Guide to Italian Cinema* (New York; Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

Chan, Kenneth, '*Goodbye, Dragon Inn*: Tsai Ming-liang's Political Aesthetics of Nostalgia, Place, and Lingering', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1:2 (2007), pp. 89-103.

Chapman, James, 'Films and Flea-pits: *The Smallest Show on Earth*', in Burton, O'Sullivan and Wells, *Liberal Directions*, pp. 194-202.

Chen, Kuan-Hsing, 'Taiwan New Cinema, or a Global Nativism?', in Vitali and Willemen, *Theorising National Cinema*, pp. 138-47.

Cherchi Usai, Paolo, *The Death of Cinema: History, Cultural Memory and the Digital Dark Age* (London: British Film Institute, 2001).

Clayton, Alex, and Klevan, Andrew (eds), *The Language and Style of Film Criticism* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2011).

Cohan, Steven, '"The Gay Cowboy Movie": Queer Masculinity on Brokeback Mountain', in Gledhill, *Gender Meets Genre in Postwar Cinemas*, pp. 233-42.

Cohan, Steven, and Hark, Ina Rae (eds), *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993).

Collins, Jo, and Jervis, John (eds), *Uncanny Modernity: Cultural Theories, Modern Anxieties* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Cook, David A, '"We're in the Money!" A Brief History of Market Power Concentration and Risk Aversion in the American Film Industry from the Edison Trust to the Rise of Transnational Media Conglomerates', in Vitali and Willemen, *Theorising National Cinema*, pp. 158-71.

Cook, Roger F, and Gemünden, Gerd (eds), *The Cinema of Wim Wenders: Image, Narrative, and the Postmodern Condition* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1997).

Corrigan, Timothy, *New German Film: The Displaced Image* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

Crafton, Donald, 'Pie and Chase: Gag, Spectacle and Narrative in Slapstick Comedy', in Karnick and Jenkins, *Classical Hollywood Comedy*, pp. 106-19.

Davies, Philip, and Neve, Brian (eds), *Cinema, Politics, and Society in America* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1985).

Davis, Darrell William and Chen, Ru-Shou Robert (eds), *Cinema Taiwan: Politics, Popularity and State of the Arts* (London: Routledge, 2007).

Davis, Darrell William, 'Trendy in Taiwan: Problems of Popularity in the Island's Cinema', in Davis and Chen, *Cinema Taiwan*, pp. 146-57.

De Donno, Fabrizio, and Gilson, Simon A (eds), *Beyond Catholicism: Heresy, Mysticism, and Apocalypse in Italian Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

De Lauretis, Teresa and Heath, Stephen (eds), *The Cinematic Apparatus* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

D'haeyere, Hilde, 'Slapstick on Slapstick: Mack Sennett's Metamovies Revisit the Keystone Film Company', *Film History* 26:2 (2014), pp. 82-111.

Doherty, Thomas, 'Malcolm X: In Print, On Screen', *Biography* 23:1 (Winter 2000), pp. 29-48.

Dyer, Richard, '*Anna*', in Bayman, *Directory of World Cinema. Italy*, pp. 86-8.

Dyer, Richard, *The Matter of Images: Essays on Representations* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002).

Dyer, Richard, 'The Persistence of Textual Analysis', *Kracauer Lectures in Film and Media Theory*, (Winter 2015/2016) <http://www.kracauer-lectures.de/en/winter-2015-2016/richard-dyer/>, accessed 13 February 2018.

Dyer, Richard, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1998).

Dyer, Richard, and Vincendeau, Ginette (eds), *Popular European Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1992).

Eagan, Daniel, *America's Film Legacy: The Authoritative Guide to the Landmark Movies in the National Film Registry* (New York: Continuum, 2010).

Early, Emmett, *The War Veteran in Film* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2003).

Eberwein, Robert, 'Comedy and the Film within a Film', *Wide Angle* 3 (1979), pp. 12-7.

Eco, Umberto, '*Casablanca*: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage', *SubStance* 14:2 (1985), pp. 3-12.

Eleftheriotis, Dimitris, *Popular Cinemas of Europe: Studies of Texts, Contexts and Frameworks* (New York; London: Continuum, 2001).

Eley, Geoff, and Suny, Ronald Grigor (eds), *Becoming National: A Reader* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Elsaesser, Thomas, 'Discipline through Diegesis: The Rube Film between "Attractions" and "Narrative Integration"', in Strauven, *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, pp. 205-23.

Elsaesser, Thomas, 'Germany's Imaginary America: Wim Wenders and Peter Handke', in Hayward, *European Cinema Conference Papers*, pp. 31-52.

Elsaesser, Thomas, 'The Hollywood Turn: Persistence, Reflexivity, Feedback', *Screen* 58:2 (Summer 2017), pp. 237-47.

Elsaesser, Thomas, *New German Cinema: A History* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1989).

Elsaesser, Thomas, *The Persistence of Hollywood* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012).

Elsaesser, Thomas, 'Spectators of Life: Time, Place, and Self in the Films of Wim Wenders', in Cook and Gemünden, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders*, pp. 240-56.

Enticknap, Leo, *Moving Image Technology: From Zoetrope to Digital* (London; New York: Wallflower, 2005).

Ferrari, Chiara, '"National Mike": Global Host and Global Formats in Early Italian Television', in Oren and Shahaf, *Global Television Formats*, pp. 128–47.

Field, Amanda J, 'The Case of the Multiplying Millions: Sherlock Holmes in Advertising', in Vanacker and Wynne, *Sherlock Holmes*, pp. 19-35.

Fielding, Raymond (ed.), *A Technological History of Motion Pictures and Television: An Anthology from the Pages of the Journal of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1967).

Fleig, Horst, *Wim Wenders: Hermetische Filmsprache und Fortschreiben Antiker Mythologie* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2005).

Forgacs, David, and Caldwell, Lesley, audio commentary on *Ossessione* (1943) (DVD, British Film Institute, UK, 2003) ASIN: B000094P2R.

Fouz-Hernández, Santiago (ed.), *Mysterious Skin: Male Bodies in Contemporary Cinema* (London: IB Tauris, 2009).

Fredericksen, Don, 'Modes of Reflexive Film', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* 4:3 (Summer 1979), pp. 299-320.

Galt, Rosalind, 'Italy's Landscapes of Loss: Historical Mourning and the Dialectical Image in *Cinema Paradiso*, *Mediterraneo* and *Il Postino*', *Screen* 43:2 (2002), pp. 158-73.

Galt, Rosalind, *The New European Cinema: Redrawing the Map* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

Galt, Rosalind, 'The Prettiness of Italian Cinema', in Bayman and Rigoletto, *Popular Italian Cinema*, pp. 52-68.

Garwood, Ian, 'The *Autorenfilm* in Contemporary German Cinema', in Bergfelder, Carter and Göktürk, *The German Cinema Book*, pp. 202-10.

Gates, Philippa, *Detecting Men: Masculinity and the Hollywood Detective Film* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006).

Geiger, J, and Rutsky, RL (eds.), *Film Analysis: A Norton Reader* (New York: WW Norton, 2005).

Geist, Kathe, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders: From Paris, France to Paris, Texas* (Ann Arbor, MI; London: UMI Research, 1988).

Gemünden, Gerd, 'Oedi-pal Travels: Gender in the Cinema of Wim Wenders', in Cook and Gemünden, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders*, pp. 205-21.

Gemünden, Gerd, 'On the Way to Language: Wenders' *Kings of the Road*', *Film Criticism* 15:2 (Winter 1991), pp. 13-28.

Georgakas, Dan, 'The Purple Rose of Keaton', in Horton, *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr., pp. 130-9.

Geraghty, Christine, *British Cinema in the Fifties: Gender, Genre and the 'New Look'* (London: Routledge, 2000).

Gieri, Manuela, *Contemporary Italian Filmmaking: Strategies of Subversion: Pirandello, Fellini, Scola and the Directors of the New Generation* (Toronto; London: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

Gladfelder, Hal, '*Sherlock Jr.*: The Screen and the Mirror', in Geiger and Rutsky, *Film Analysis*, pp. 138-57.

Gledhill, Christine (ed.), *Gender Meets Genre in Postwar Cinemas* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012).

Gomery, Douglas, and Pafort-Overduin, Clara, *Movie History: A Survey* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

Goodwin, James, *Akira Kurosawa and Intertextual Cinema* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

Goodwin, Michael, 'Passing Through the Equal Sign: Fractal Mathematics in *Sherlock Jr.*', in Horton, *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr., pp. 118-29.

Graf, Alexander, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders: The Celluloid Highway* (London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2002).

Grant, Barry Keith (ed.), *Interviews with Fritz Lang* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2003).

Grant, Catherine, 'Quote Unquote: The Unattainable Film Text in the Age of Digital Reproduction', *Vimeo*, (n. d.) <https://vimeo.com/10059844?ref=tw-share>, accessed 10 April 2015.

Grant, Catherine, 'Video Essays and Scholarly Remix: Film Scholarship's Emergent Forms – Audiovisual Film Studies, Part Two', *Film Studies for Free*, (20 March 2012) <http://filmstudiesforfree.blogspot.co.uk/2012/03/video-essays-and-scholarly-remix-film.html>, accessed 26 April 2015.

Gundle, Stephen, 'From Neorealism to *Luci Rosse*: Cinema, Politics, Society, 1945-85', in Barański and Lumley, *Culture and Conflict in Postwar Italy*, pp. 195-224.

Gunning, Tom, 'Attractions: How They Came into the World', in Strauven, *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, pp. 31-9.

Gunning, Tom, 'Buster Keaton or the Work of Comedy in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Cineaste* 21:3 (1995), pp. 14-6.

Gunning, Tom, 'The Cinema of Attraction[s]: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde', in Strauven, *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, pp. 381-8.

Gunning, Tom, *The Films of Fritz Lang: Allegories of Vision and Modernity* (London: British Film Institute, 2000).

Gunning, Tom, 'Moving Away from the Index: Cinema and the Impression of Reality', *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 18:1 (2007), pp. 31-52.

Gunning, Tom, '"Now You See It, Now You Don't": The Temporality of the Cinema of Attractions', *The Velvet Light Trap* 32 (September 1993), pp. 3-12.

Gunning, Tom, 'Uncanny Reflections, Modern Illusions: Sighting the Modern Optical Uncanny', in Collins and Jervis, *Uncanny Modernity*, pp. 68-90.

Gymnich, Marion, 'Meta-Film und Meta-TV: Möglichkeiten und Funktionen von Metaisierung in Filmen und Fernsehserien', in Hauthal, *Metaisierung in Literatur und anderen Medien*, pp. 127-54.

Haastrup, Helle Kannik, 'Storytelling Intertextuality: From *Django Unchained* to *The Matrix*', *Film International* 12:67 (2014), pp. 85-97.

Hake, Sabine, 'Transatlantic Careers: Ernst Lubitsch and Fritz Lang', in Bergfelder, Carter and Göktürk, *The German Cinema Book*, pp. 217-26.

Hamel, Jean-François, 'Lorsque le Récit Devient Autoréflexif: Mises en Abyme', *Ciné-Bulles* 29:4 (Autumn 2011), pp. 48-51.

Hansen, Miriam, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 1991).

Hark, Ina Rae (ed.), *Exhibition: The Film Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Hauthal, Janine (ed.), *Metaisierung in Literatur und anderen Medien* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007).

Hay, James, *Popular Film Culture in Fascist Italy: The Passing of the Rex* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987).

Hayward, Susan (ed.), *European Cinema Conference Papers* (Birmingham: AMLC, 1985).

Heath, Stephen, 'The Cinematic Apparatus: Technology as Historical and Cultural Form', in De Lauretis and Heath, *The Cinematic Apparatus*, pp. 1-13.

Heimpel, Rod S, 'Hitchcock's *Psycho* in Stephen Frear's *The Grifters*', *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 3:1 (Spring 1994), pp. 45-65.

Higham, Charles, and Greenberg, Joel, 'Interview with Fritz Lang, 1969', in Grant, *Interviews with Fritz Lang*, pp. 101-26.

Hill, John, 'British Cinema as National Cinema', in Vitali and Willemen, *Theorising National Cinema*, pp. 100-13.

Hill, John, *British Cinema in the 1980s: Issues and Themes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Hill, John, and McLoone, Martin (eds), *Big Picture, Small Screen: The Relations Between Film and Television* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 1996).

Hoberman, J, 'Across the Movi-verse', *Film Comment* 48:2 (March/April 2012), pp. 34-9.

Hoberman, J, *Film after Film: Or, What Became of 21st-Century Cinema?* (London: Verso, 2012).

Holmes, Joseph O, *The Booth: The Last Days of Film Projection* (Publisher not identified: United States, 2013).

Holmes, Joseph O, 'Projection: 85 Years of the Projection Booth in Movies', *Vimeo*, (2013) <https://vimeo.com/76383856>, accessed 2 October 2014.

Hope, William, 'Giuseppe Tornatore: Nostalgia; Emotion; Cognition', in Hope, *Italian Cinema*, pp. 53-77.

Hope, William (ed.), *Italian Cinema: New Directions* (New York; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005).

Horton, Andrew (ed.), *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Hu, Brian, ‘Goodbye City, Goodbye Cinema: Nostalgia in Tsai Ming-liang’s *The Skywalk is Gone*’, *Senses of Cinema* 29 (December 2003) <http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/feature-articles/skywalk_is_gone/>, accessed 1 September 2015.

Iampolski, Mikhail, *The Memory of Tiresias: Intertextuality and Film* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

Jenkins, Henry, ‘“This Fellow Keaton Seems to Be the Whole Show”: Buster Keaton, Interrupted Performance, and the Vaudeville Aesthetic’, in Horton, *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr., pp. 29-66.

Jones, Kent, ‘Here and There: The Films of Tsai Ming-liang’, in Rosenbaum and Martin, *Movie Mutations*, pp. 44-51.

Kaes, Anton, ‘Siegfried – A German Film Star Performing the Nation in Lang’s *Nibelungen* Film’, in Bergfelder, Carter and Göktürk, *The German Cinema Book*, pp. 63-70.

Karnick, Kristine Brunovska, and Jenkins, Henry (eds), *Classical Hollywood Comedy* (New York; London: Routledge, 1995).

Kawin, Bruce, ‘Authorial and Systemic Self-Consciousness in Literature and Film’, *Literature/Film Quarterly* 10:1 (1982), pp. 3-12.

Keathley, Christian, ‘La Caméra-Stylo: Notes on Video Criticism and Cinephilia’, in Clayton and Klevan, *The Language and Style of Film Criticism*, pp. 176-91.

King, Geoff, *New Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (London: IB Tauris, 2002).

Kiss, Miklos, ‘The Audiovisual Research Essay as an Alternative to Text-Based Scholarship’, *[in]Transition: A Media Commons / Cinema Journal Project*, (22 August 2014) <http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/intransition/2014/09/14/audiovisual-research-essay-alternative-text-based-scholarship>, accessed 26 April 2015.

Klinger, Barbara, *Beyond the Multiplex: Cinema, New Technologies, and the Home* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

Knight, Julia, *New German Cinema: Images of a Generation* (London and New York: Wallflower, 2004).

Kolker, Robert Phillip, and Beicken, Peter, *The Films of Wim Wenders: Cinema as Vision and Desire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Krämer, Peter, ‘“Clean, Dependable Slapstick”: Comic Violence and the Emergence of Classical Hollywood Cinema’, in Slocum, *Violence and American Cinema*, pp. 103-16.

Krämer, Peter, ‘Hollywood in Germany / Germany in Hollywood’, in Bergfelder, Carter and Göktürk, *The German Cinema Book*, pp. 227-37.

Kristeva, Julia, edited by Toril Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

Kuzniar, Alice, 'Wenders's Windshields', in Cook and Gemünden, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders*, pp. 222-39.

Lamberson, Gregory, *Cheap Scares!: Low Budget Horror Filmmakers Share Their Secrets* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009).

Landy, Marcia, *Italian Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Leggett, Steve, 'List of 7200 Lost US Silent Feature Films 1912-29', *The Library of Congress*, (29 December 2016) <https://www.loc.gov/programs/static/national-film-preservation-board/documents/Lost%20silent.updated_122916.pdf>, accessed 26 April 2018.

Library of Congress, '*Interrupted Lovers*', *Library of Congress*, (n. d.) <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694126/>, accessed 8 January 2017.

Library of Congress, '*Trapeze Disrobing Act*', *Library of Congress*, (n. d.) <https://www.loc.gov/item/96514756/>, accessed 18 April 2018.

Library of Congress, '*Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*', *Library of Congress*, (n. d.) <https://www.loc.gov/item/00694324/>, accessed 8 January 2017.

Lim, SH, 'Positioning Auteur Theory in Chinese Cinemas Studies: Intratextuality, Intertextuality and Paratextuality in the Films of Tsai Ming-liang', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1:3 (2007), pp. 223-45.

Liu, Yung-hao, '"I Thought of the Times We Were in Front of the Flowers": Analyzing the Opening Credits of *Goodbye Dragon Inn*', in Davis and Chen (eds), *Cinema Taiwan*, pp. 172-82.

Lopour, Jaroslav, 'Jára Kohout', *Česko-Slovenská filmová databáze*, (2001-18) <https://www.csfd.cz/tvurce/1601-jara-kohout/>, accessed 19 April 2018.

Loiperdinger, Martin, 'State Legislation, Censorship and Funding', in Bergfelder, Carter and Göktürk, *The German Cinema Book*, pp. 148-57.

Loukides, Paul, and Fuller, Linda K (eds), *Beyond the Stars: Stock Characters in American Popular Film* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University, 1990).

Louvish, Simon, *Keystone: The Life and Clowns of Mack Sennett* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005).

Ma, Jean, *Melancholy Drift: Marking Time in Chinese Cinema* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2010).

Marcus, Millicent, *After Fellini: National Cinema in the Postmodern Age* (Baltimore, MD; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002).

Martin, Fran, 'The European Undead: Tsai Ming-liang's Temporal Dysphoria', *Senses of Cinema* 27 (July 2003) <http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/feature-articles/tsai_european_undead/>, accessed 1 September 2015.

Martin, Fran, 'Introduction: Tsai Ming-liang's Intimate Public Worlds', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1:2 (2007), pp. 83-8.

Matthews, Glenn E, and Tarkington, Raife G, 'Early History of Amateur Motion-Picture Film', in Fielding, *A Technological History of Motion Pictures and Television*, pp. 129-41.

Mayne, Judith, *Private Novels, Public Films* (Athens, GA; London: University of Georgia Press, 1988).

Mayne, Judith, *The Woman at the Keyhole: Feminism and Women's Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).

McKillop, Ian, and Sinyard, Neil (eds), *British Cinema of the 1950s: A Celebration* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

McLean, Adrienne L, and Cook, David A (eds), *Headline Hollywood: A Century of Film Scandal* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

McLeland, Susan, 'Barbarella Goes Radical: Hanoi Jane and the American Popular Press', in McLean and Cook, *Headline Hollywood*, pp. 232-52.

McNutt, Randy, *Cal Stewart, Your Uncle Josh: America's King of Rural Comedy* (iUniverse, 2011).

Metz, Christian, *Impersonal Enunciation, or the Place of Film* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

Milne, Tom, '*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* (*Cinema Paradiso*)', *Monthly Film Bulletin* 57 (March 1990), pp. 72-3.

Moews, Daniel, *Keaton: The Silent Features Close Up* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1977).

Monaco, James, *The Movie Guide* (New York, NY: Perigee Books, 1992).

Morag, Raya, *Defeated Masculinity: Post-Traumatic Cinema in the Aftermath of War* (Bruxelles; New York: PIE Peter Lang, 2009).

Morley, David, and Robins, Kevin, 'No Place Like *Heimat*: Images of Home(land) in European Culture', in Eley and Suny, *Becoming National*, pp. 456-78.

Morley, David, and Robins, Kevin, ‘Spaces of Identity: Communications Technologies and the Reconfiguration of Europe’, in Vitali and Willemen, *Theorising National Cinema*, pp. 293-303.

Morra, Anne, 'Turner Classic Movies Presents 24 Hours of Films Preserved by MoMA', *Inside/Out: A MOMA/MOMA PS1 Blog*, (15 March 2011) <https://www.moma.org/explore/inside_out/2011/03/15/24-hour-marathon-of-films-preserved-bymoma-on-turner-classic-movies/>, accessed 18 April 2018.

Morse, Erik, ‘Time & Again’, *Frieze* 137 (March 2011) <http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/time-again/>, accessed 14 September 2015.

Musser, Charles, *Before the Nickelodeon: Edwin S Porter and the Edison Manufacturing Company* (Berkeley; Oxford: University of California Press, 1991).

Musser, Charles, ‘A Cinema of Contemplation, a Cinema of Discernment: Spectatorship, Intertextuality and Attractions in the 1890s’, in Strauven, *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, pp. 159-79.

Musser, Charles, *Edison Motion Pictures, 1890-1900: An Annotated Filmography* (Gemona (UD) Italy: Giornate del cinema muto, 1997).

Musser, Charles, ‘Rethinking Early Cinema: Cinema of Attractions and Narrativity’, in Strauven, *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded*, pp. 389-416.

Neale, Steve, ‘Art Cinema as Institution’, *Screen* 22:1 (May 1981), pp. 11–39.

Ng, Maria N, and Holden, Philip (eds), *Reading Chinese Transnationalisms: Society, Literature, Film* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006).

Niessen, Niels, ‘Lives of Cinema: Against its ‘Death’’, *Screen* 52:3 (Autumn 2011), pp. 307-26.

Niver, Kemp R, and Bergsten, Bebe, *Motion Pictures from the Library of Congress Paper Print Collection 1894-1912* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

Nöth, Winfried, ‘The Death of Photography in Self-Reference’, in Nöth and Bishara, *Self-Reference in the Media*, pp. 95-106.

Nöth, Winfried, ‘Metapictures and Self-Referential Pictures’, in Nöth and Bishara, *Self-Reference in the Media*, pp. 61-78.

Nöth, Winfried, ‘Self-Reference in the Media: The Semiotic Framework’, in Nöth and Bishara, *Self-Reference in the Media*, pp. 4-30.

Nöth, Winfried, and Bishara, Nina (eds), *Self-Reference in the Media* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 2007).

O'Brien, Daniel, 'Hercules versus Hercules: Variation and Continuation in Two Generations of Heroic Masculinity', in Bayman and Rigoletto, *Popular Italian Cinema*, pp. 183-99.

O'Brien, Daniel, 'Peplum', in Bayman, *Directory of World Cinema. Italy*, pp. 176-8.

Omer, Atalia, and Springs, Jason A, *Religious Nationalism: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: Abc-clio, 2013).

O'Neill, D Cuong, 'Cinematic Cruising: Tsai Ming-liang's *Bu san* and the Strangely Moving Bodies of Taiwanese Cinema', in Fouz-Hernández, *Mysterious Skin*, pp. 193-205.

Oren, Tasha, and Shahaf, Sharon (eds), *Global Television Formats: Understanding Television Across Borders* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

Orgeron, Devin, *Road Movies: From Muybridge and Méliès to Lynch and Kiarostami* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Overpeck, Deron, '"Make Mine a Movie! In a Movie Theater!" (Or on My Pay-TV Service): How America's Theater Owners Learned to Stop Worrying and Accept Cable Television, 1969-1976', *Screening the Past*, (21 October 2013) <http://www.screeningthepast.com/2013/10/%E2%80%9C%E2%80%99make-mine-a-movie-in-a-movie-theater%E2%80%99-or-on-my-pay-tv-service-how-america%E2%80%99s-theater-owners-learned-to-stop-worrying-and-accept-cable-television-1969-1976/>, accessed 23 July 2017..

Parish, James Robert, Pitts, Michael R, and Mank, Gregory W, *Hollywood on Hollywood* (Metuchen; London: Scarecrow Press, 1978).

Parshall, Peter F, 'Houdini's Protégé: Buster Keaton in *Sherlock Jr.*', in Horton, *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr., pp. 67-88.

Pearson, David B, 'Playing Detective: Possible Solutions to the Production Mysteries of *Sherlock Jr.*', in Horton, *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr., pp. 140-57.

Perkins, VF, 'The Atlantic Divide', in Dyer and Vincendeau, *Popular European Cinema*, pp. 194-205.

Perkins, VF, *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1993).

Perkins, VF, 'Must We Say What They Mean? Film Criticism and Interpretation', *Movie* 34-5 (Winter 1990), pp. 1-6.

Petro, Patrice (ed.), *Idols of Modernity: Movie Stars of the 1920s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2010).

Pilipp, Frank, 'Creative Incest: Cross- and Self-Referencing in Recent Hollywood Cinema', *Literature/Film Quarterly* 27:1 (1999), pp. 55-64.

Price, Elain, ‘A Cultural Exchange: S4C, Channel 4 and Film’, *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 33:3 (2013), pp. 418-33.

Quince, Peter, ‘Double Takes’, *Sight and Sound* 55:3 (Summer 1986), pp. 176-7.

Radstone, Susannah, ‘Cinema/Memory/History’, *Screen* 36:1 (1995), pp. 34-47.

Rapfogel, Jared, ‘From 35mm to DCP: A Critical Symposium on the Changing Face of Motion Picture Exhibition’, *Cineaste* 37:4 (Fall 2012), pp. 32-42.

Rapfogel, Jared, ‘Taiwan's Poet of Solitude: An Interview with Tsai Ming-liang’, *Cineaste* 29:4 (Fall 2004), pp. 26-9.

Rayns, Tony, ‘Laying Foundations: *Dragon Gate Inn*’, *Cinemaya* 39-40 (1998), pp. 80-3.

Reiner, Robert, ‘“Keystone to Kojak: The Hollywood Cop”’, in Davies and Neve, *Cinema, Politics, and Society in America*, pp. 195-220.

Rentschler, Eric, *West German Film in the Course of Time: Reflections on the Twenty Years since Oberhausen* (Bedford Hills, NY: Redgrave, 1984).

Rentschler, Eric (ed.), *West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices* (New York; London: Holmes & Meier, 1988).

Richards, Jeffrey, ‘Basil Dearden at Ealing’, in Burton, O'Sullivan and Wells, *Liberal Directions*, pp. 14-35.

Rist, Peter, ‘King Hu: Experimental, Narrative Filmmaker’, in Davis and Chen, *Cinema Taiwan*, pp. 161-71.

Rolinson, Dave, ‘“If They Want Culture, They Pay”: Consumerism and Alienation in 1950s Comedies’, in McKillop and Sinyard, *British Cinema of the 1950s*, pp. 87-97.

Rosen, Philip, ‘History, Textuality, Nation: Kracauer, Burch and Some Problems in the Study of National Cinemas’, in Vitali and Willemen, *Theorising National Cinema*, pp. 17-28.

Rosenbaum, David, ‘The Industry: Trysting with Trolls’, *Film Comment* 11:3 (May-June 1975), pp. 36-7.

Rosenbaum, Jonathan, and Martin, Adrian (eds), *Movie Mutations: The Changing Face of World Cinephilia* (London: BFI Publishing, 2003).

Rothman, William, ‘Silence and Stasis’, in Clayton and Klevan, *The Language and Style of Film Criticism*, pp. 107-20.

Rowe Karlyn, Kathleen, ‘The Detective and the Fool: Or, The Mystery of Manhood in *Sherlock Jr.*’, in Horton, *Buster Keaton's* Sherlock Jr., pp. 89-117.

Saint-Cyr, Marc, ‘Slow Fuse: The Cinematic Strategies of Tsai Ming-liang’, *Cineaction* 85 (August 2011), pp. 9-14.

Schmidt, Nicolas, ‘Les Usages du Procédé de Film dans le Film’, *CinémAction* 124 (May 2007), pp. 102-12.

Siebert, Jan, ‘Self-Reference in Animated Films’, in Nöth and Bishara, *Self-Reference in the Media*, pp. 155-61.

Siska, William C, ‘Metacinema: A Modern Necessity’, *Literature/Film Quarterly* 7:4 (1979), pp. 285-89.

Sisto, Antonella C, *Film Sound in Italy: Listening to the Screen* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Slide, Anthony, *Fifty Classic British Films, 1932-1982: A Pictorial Record* (New York: Dover Publications, 1985).

Slocum, J David (ed.), *Violence and American Cinema* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).

Small, Pauline, ‘Representing the Female: Rural Idylls, Urban Nightmares', in Hope, *Italian Cinema*, pp. 151-73.

Smith, Richard Harland, '*The Projectionist*', *TCM*, (n. d.) <http://tcm.tv/this-month/article/362740%7C362751/The-Projectionist.html>, accessed 21 July 2017.

Sontag, Susan, ‘The Decay of Cinema’, *Nytimes.Com*, (25 February 1996) <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/00/03/12/specials/sontag-cinema.html?_r=1>, accessed 25 April 2018.

Sorlin, Pierre, *Italian National Cinema, 1896-1996* (London: Routledge, 1996).

Spoerri, Bettina, ‘“Rewind the Film!”: Metafiktionale Variationen über Manipulationen im Film’, *Cinema* 58 (2013), pp. 66-79.

Stam, Robert, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature: From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

Strauven, Wanda (ed.), *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006).

Stuckey, GA, ‘Ghosts in the Theatre: Generic Play and Temporality in Tsai Ming-liang’s *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*’, *Asian Cinema* 25:1 (2014), pp. 33-48.

Sweeney, Kevin W, ‘The Dream of Disruption’, *Wide Angle* 13:1 (1991), pp. 104-20.

Telotte, JP, ‘Introduction: Film and/as Technology: Assessing a Bargain’, *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 28:4 (Winter 2001), pp. 146-9.

Treveri Gennari, Daniela, 'Catholicism and Neorealism: Zavattini's Contribution to Universalia-Produced *Prima Comunione* (Blasetti, 1950)', in De Donno and Gilson, *Beyond Catholicism*, pp. 171-93.

Treveri Gennari, Daniela, *Post-War Italian Cinema: American Intervention, Vatican Interests* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

Tsai, Ming-liang, 'On the Uses and Misuses of Cinema', *Senses of Cinema* 58 (March 2011) <http://sensesofcinema.com/2011/feature-articles/on-the-uses-and-misuses-of-cinema/>, accessed 4 August 2015.

Tweedie, James, 'Morning in the New Metropolis: Taipei and the Globalization of the City Film', in Davis and Chen, *Cinema Taiwan*, pp. 116-30.

Vanacker, Sabine, and Wynne, Catherine (eds), *Sherlock Holmes and Conan Doyle: Multi-Media Afterlives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

Verevis, Constantine, *Film Remakes* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

Vitali, Valentina, and Willemen, Paul (eds), *Theorising National Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 2006).

Wagstaff, Christopher, *Italian Neorealist Cinema: An Aesthetic Approach* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

Wang, Shujen, and Fujiwara, Chris, '"My Films Reflect My Living Situation": An Interview with Tsai Ming-liang on Film Spaces, Audiences, and Distribution', *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 14:1 (Spring 2006), pp. 219-41.

Watt, Mike, *Fervid Filmmaking: 66 Cult Pictures of Vision, Verve and No Self-Restraint* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2013).

Wells, Paul, 'Sociability, Sentimentality and Sensibility: Basil Dearden and the English Comic Tradition', in Burton, O'Sullivan and Wells, *Liberal Directions*, pp. 36-58.

Wenders, Wim, *Emotion Pictures: Reflections on the Cinema* (London: Faber, 1989).

Wenders, Wim, 'Filmverlag der Autoren Edition', *Filmverlag der Autoren Edition*, (n. d.) <http://www.filmverlagderautoren.de/material/FDA_Vorwort.pdf>, accessed 19 April 2018.

Wenders, Wim, 'Impossible Stories', in Cook and Gemünden, *The Cinema of Wim Wenders*, pp. 33-41.

Werner, Wolf, 'Metafiction and Metamusic: Exploring the Limits of Metareference', in Nöth and Bishara, *Self-Reference in the Media*, pp. 303-24.

Willemen, Paul, 'The National Revisited', in Vitali and Willemen, *Theorising National Cinema*, pp. 29-43.

Wilson, Flannery, *New Taiwanese Cinema in Focus: Moving Within and Beyond the Frame* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

Withalm, Gloria, 'The Self-Reflexive Screen: Outlines of a Comprehensive Model', in Nöth and Bishara, *Self-Reference in the Media*, pp. 125-42.

Wolfe, Charles, 'Buster Keaton: Comic Invention and the Art of Moving Pictures', in Petro, *Idols of Modernity*, pp. 41-64.

Wood, Chris, 'Realism, Intertextuality and Humour in Tsai Ming-liang's *Goodbye, Dragon Inn*', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1:2 (2007), pp. 105-16.

Wood, Robin, *Howard Hawks* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006).

Woodward, Kate, 'Babel and the Dragon's Tongue: S4C and its Bilingual and Multilingual films', *British Universities Film & Video Council*, (2012) http://bufvc.ac.uk/tvandradio/c4pp/the-project/channel-4-conferences/conference-2012, accessed 24 July 2016.

Worton, Michael, and Still, Judith (eds), *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

Wu, Chia-chi, 'Festivals, Criticism and the International Reputation of Taiwan New Cinema', in Davis and Chen, *Cinema Taiwan*, pp. 75-91.

Yoshimoto, Mitsuhiro, 'National/International/Transnational: The Concept of Trans-Asian Cinema and the Cultural Politics of Film Criticism', in Vitali and Willemen, *Theorising National Cinema*, pp. 254-61.

Young, Paul, *The Cinema Dreams Its Rivals: Media Fantasy Films from Radio to the Internet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

Filmography

Alabama (2000 Light Years), Dir. Wim Wenders, Prod. Hochschule für Fernsehen und Film München (HFF); Wim Wenders Stiftung, West Germany, 1969.

Amarcord, Dir. Federico Fellini, Prod. FC Produzioni; PECF, Italy; France, 1973.

American Graffiti, Dir. George Lucas, Prod. Universal Pictures, USA, 1973.

Amy Muller, Dir. William Heise, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1896.

...And God Created Woman (*Et Dieu... créa la femme*), Dir. Roger Vadim, Prod. Cocinor; Iéna Productions; Union Cinématographique Lyonnaise (UCIL), France; Italy, 1956.

Anna, Dir. Alberto Lattuada, Prod. Carlo Ponti Cinematografica; Compagnie Cinématographique de France; Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica; Lux Film, Italy; France, 1951.

The Bad and the Beautiful, Dir. Vincente Minnelli, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA, 1952.

Barbarella, Dir. Roger Vadim, Prod. Marianne Productions; Dino de Laurentiis Cinematografica, France; Italy, 1968.

Berberian Sound Studio, Dir. Peter Strickland, Prod. Warp X; Illuminations Films, UK, 2012.

Bill as an Operator (*Patouillard opérateur de ciné*), Dir. Paul Bertho, Prod. Lux Compagnie Cinématographique de France, France, 1910.

Bitter Rice (*Riso amaro*), Dir. Giuseppe De Santis, Prod. Lux Film, Italy, 1949.

The Blob, Dir. Irvin Yeaworth, Prod. Tonylyn Productions Inc, USA, 1958.

Blood and Sand, Dir. Fred Niblo, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1922.

Breathless (*À bout de souffle*), Dir. Jean-Luc Godard, Prod. Les Films Impéria; Les Productions Georges de Beauregard; Société Nouvelle de Cinématographie, France, 1960.

Bulletproof Monk, Dir. Paul Hunter, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA; Canada, 2003.

Cabiria, Dir. Giovanni Pastrone, Prod. Itala Film, Italy, 1914.

Carol, Dir. Todd Haynes, Prod. The Weinstein Company; Film4, UK; USA, 2015.

Cartouches gauloises, Dir. Mehdi Charef, Prod. KG Productions, France; Algeria, 2007.

Casablanca, Dir. Michael Curtiz, Prod. Warner Bros, USA, 1942.

Casino Royale, Dir. Ken Hughes et al, Prod. Famous Artists Productions, UK; USA 1967.

Caught, Dir. Max Ophüls, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA, 1949.

Cinema Paradiso (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso*), Dir. Giuseppe Tornatore, Prod. Cristaldifilm, Italy; France, 1988.

Citizen Kane, Dir. Orson Welles, Prod. RKO Radio Pictures; Mercury Productions, USA, 1941.

Clash by Night, Dir. Fritz Lang, Prod. RKO Radio Pictures, USA, 1952.

Comin' Thro the Rye, Dir. Cecil M Hepworth, Prod. Hepworth, UK, 1923.

Coming Up Roses (*Rhosyn a Rhith*), Dir. Stephen Bayly, Prod. Red Rooster Film & Television Entertainment; Sianel 4 Cymru (S4C), UK, 1986.

Contempt (*Le mépris*), Dir. Jean-Luc Godard, Prod. Rome Paris Films; Les Films Concordia; Compagnia Cinematografica Champion, France; Italy, 1963.

The Countryman and the Cinematograph, Dir. Robert W Paul, Prod. Paul's Animatograph Works, UK, 1901.

Desperately Seeking Susan, Dir. Susan Seidelman, Prod. Orion Pictures, USA, 1985.

Dragon Inn (*Long men kezhan*), Dir. King Hu, Prod. Union Film Company, Taiwan; Hong Kong, 1967.

Easy Rider, Dir. Dennis Hopper, Prod. Pando Company Inc; Raybert Productions, USA, 1969.

Eskimo Nell, Dir. Martin Campbell, Prod. Salon Productions, UK, 1975.

The Extra Turn, Dir. Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1903.

Fight Club, Dir. David Fincher, Prod. Fox 2000 Pictures, USA; Germany, 1999.

Fury, Dir. Fritz Lang, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA, 1936.

Gas Food Lodging, Dir. Allison Anders, Prod. Cineville, USA, 1992.

The Gay Shoe Clerk, Dir. Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1903.

Gerald McBoing-Boing's Symphony, Dir. Robert Cannon, Prod. United Productions of America, USA, 1953.

Goodbye, Dragon Inn (*Bu san*), Dir. Tsai Ming-liang, Prod. Homegreen Films, Taiwan, 2003.

Gremlins, Dir. Joe Dante, Prod. Warner Bros, USA, 1984.

Gremlins 2: The New Batch, Dir. Joe Dante, Prod. Warner Bros, USA, 1990.

Hellzapoppin', Dir. HC Potter, Prod. Universal Pictures, USA, 1941.

Here Is Your Life (*Här har du ditt liv*), Dir. Jan Troell, Prod. Svensk Filmindustri, Sweden, 1966.

The Hole (*Dong*), Dir. Tsai Ming-liang, Prod. Arc Light Films; Central Motion Pictures; China Television (CTV); Haut et Court; La Sept-Arte, Taiwan; France, 1998.

Hollywood Boulevard, Dir. Allan Arkush; Joe Dante, Prod. New World Pictures, USA, 1976.

HyperNormalisation, Dir. Adam Curtis, Prod. BBC, UK, 2016.

Inglourious Basterds, Dir. Quentin Tarantino, Prod. Universal Pictures, Germany; USA, 2009.

The Interrupted Bathers, Dir. George S Fleming; Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1902.

Interrupted Lovers, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1896.

I Vitelloni, Dir. Federico Fellini, Prod. Cité Films; Peg-Films, Italy; France, 1953.

Katyń, Dir. Andrzej Wajda, Prod. Akson Studio, Poland, 2007.

Kings of the Road (*Im Lauf der Zeit*), Dir. Wim Wenders, Prod. Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR); Wim Wenders Productions, West Germany, 1976.

Konga, Dir. John Lemont, Prod. Merton Park Studios, UK; USA, 1961.

The Last Showing, Dir. Phil Hawkins, Prod. The Philm Company, UK, 2014.

Luke's Movie Muddle, Dir. Hal Roach, Prod. Rolin Films, USA, 1916.

Mabel's Dramatic Career, Dir. Mack Sennett, Prod. Keystone Film Company, USA, 1913.

The Magic Box, Dir. John Boulting, Prod. Festival Film Productions, UK, 1951.

The Majestic, Dir. Frank Darabont, Prod. Castle Rock Entertainment, USA, 2001.

Masculin-Féminin, Dir. Jean-Luc Godard, Prod. Anouchka Films; Argos Films; Sandrews; Svensk Filmindustri, France; Sweden, 1966.

A Movie Star, Dir. Fred Hibbard, Prod. Keystone Film Company, USA, 1916.

Mr Bean's Holiday, Dir. Steve Bendelack, Prod. Universal Pictures, UK; France; Germany; USA, 2007.

The Muppet Movie, Dir. James Frawley, Prod. Henson Associates; ITC Films, UK; USA, 1979.

Die Nibelungen: Kriemhild's Revenge (*Die Nibelungen: Kriemhilds Rache*), Dir. Fritz Lang, Prod. Decla-Bioscop AG; Universum Film (UFA), Germany, 1924.

Die Nibelungen: Siegfried, Dir. Fritz Lang, Prod. Decla-Bioscop AG; Universum Film (UFA), Germany, 1924.

The Nice Guys, Dir. Shane Black, Prod. Misty Mountains, USA, 2016.

Nickelodeon, Dir. Peter Bogdanovich, Prod. British Lion Film Corporation; Columbia Pictures Corporation; EMI Films, UK; USA, 1976.

Obselidia, Dir. Diane Bell, USA, 2010.

Peeping Tom, Dir. Michael Powell, Prod. Michael Powell (Theatre), UK, 1960.

The Projectionist, Dir. Harry Hurwitz, Prod. Maglan, USA, 1971.

Quadrophenia, Dir. Franc Roddam, Prod. The Who Films; Polytel, UK, 1979.

The Revenge of a Kinematograph Cameraman (*Mest kinematograficheskogo operatora*), Dir. Wladyslaw Starewicz, Prod. Khanzhonkov, Russia, 1912.

Rubes in the Theatre, Dir. Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1901.

Seminary Girls, Dir. James H White, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1897.

Service (*Serbis*), Dir. Brillante Mendoza, Prod. Centerstage Productions, Philippines; France; South Korea; Hong Kong, 2008.

The Sheik, Dir. George Melford, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1921.

Sherlock Holmes, Dir. Albert Parker, Prod. Goldwyn Pictures Corporation, USA, 1922.

Sherlock Jr., Dir. Buster Keaton, Prod. Buster Keaton Productions, USA, 1924.

Side by Side, Dir. Christopher Kenneally, Prod. Company Films, USA, 2012.

The Skywalk is Gone (*Tian qiao bu jian le*), Dir. Tsai Ming-liang, Prod. Homegreen Films; Le Fresnoy Studio National des Arts Contemporains, Taiwan; France, 2002.

The Smallest Show on Earth, Dir. Basil Dearden, Prod. British Lion Films, UK, 1957.

The Spirit of the Beehive (*El espíritu de la colmena*), Dir. Victor Erice, Prod. Elías Querejeta Producciones Cinematográficas SL; Jacel Desposito, Spain, 1973.

Splendor, Dir. Ettore Scola, Prod. Cecchi Gori Group Tiger Cinematografica, Italy; France, 1989.

Stop Press Girl, Dir. Michael Barry, Prod. Aquila Film, UK, 1949.

Sunset Boulevard, Dir. Billy Wilder, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1950.

Targets, Dir. Peter Bogdanovich, Prod. Saticoy Productions, USA, 1968.

La Terra Trema, Dir. Luchino Visconti, Prod. Universalia Film, Italy, 1948.

The Tingler, Dir. William Castle, Prod. Columbia Pictures, USA, 1959.

Trapeze Disrobing Act, Dir. George S Fleming; Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1901.

Two Chappies in a Box, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1903.

Two Rubes at the Theatre, Prod. S Lubin, USA, 1901.

Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show, Dir. Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1902.

Uncle Josh's Nightmare, Dir. Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1900.

Uncle Josh in a Spooky Hotel, Dir. Edwin S Porter, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1900.

A Useful Life (*La vida útil*), Dir. Federico Veiroj, Prod. Cinekdoque; Mediapro; Versátil Cinema, Uruguay; Spain, 2010.

What Demoralized the Barbershop, Prod. Edison Manufacturing Company, USA, 1901.

What Time Is It There? (*Ni na bian ji dian*), Dir. Tsai Ming-liang, Prod. Arena Films; Homegreen Films, Taiwan; France, 2001.

Wish You Were Here, Dir. David Leland, Prod. Channel Four Films, UK, 1987.

Wrong Move (*Falsche Bewegung*), Dir. Wim Wenders, Prod. Albatros Produktion; Solaris Film; Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR); Wim Wenders Stiftung, West Germany, 1975.